



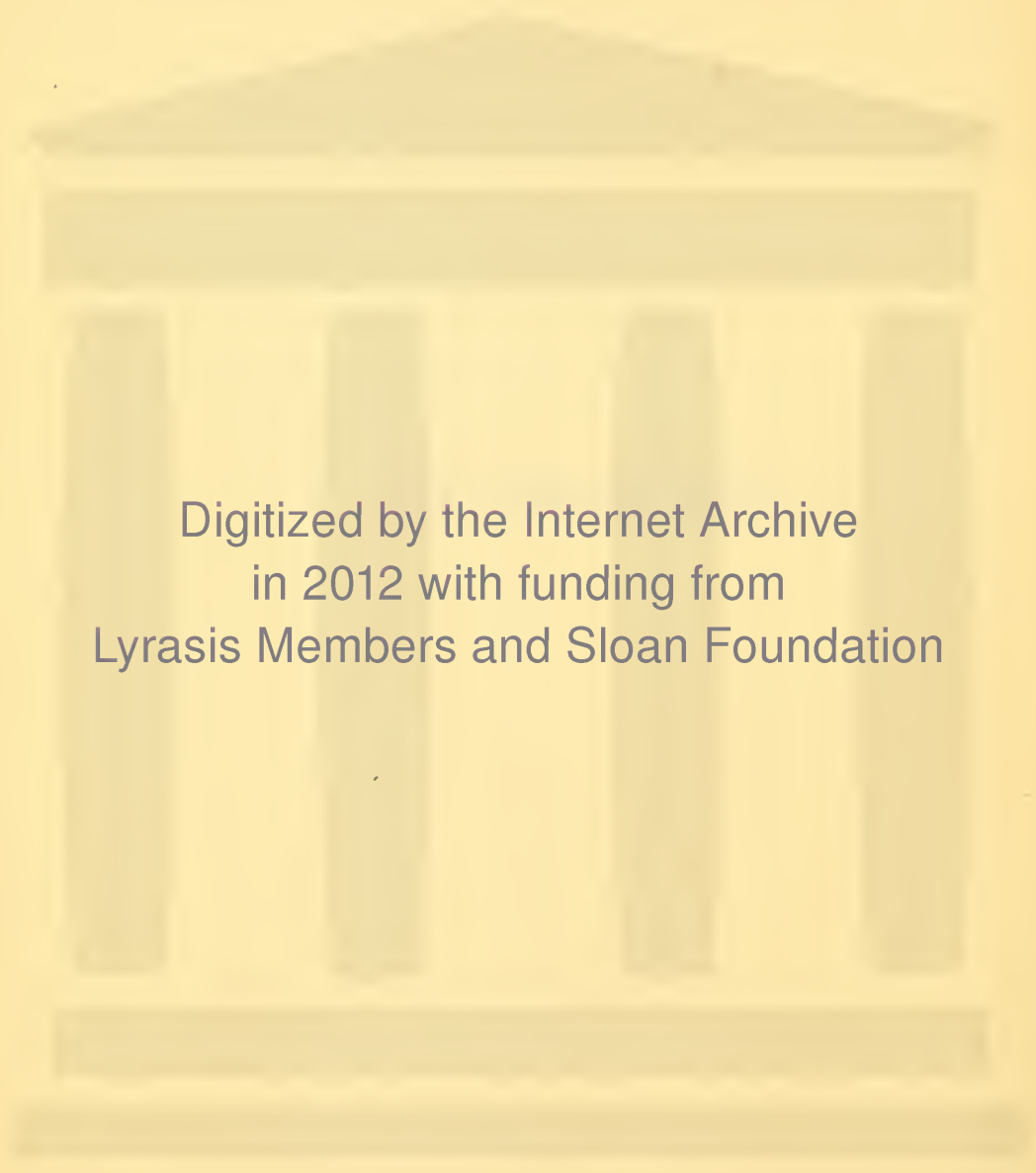








KONNERSREUTH



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# KONNERSREUTH

A MEDICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY  
OF THE CASE OF TERESA NEUMANN

BY

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## DECLARATION

CONFORMABLY to the decree of Pope Urban VIII the translator declares that in the following pages the words 'saint,' 'miracle' are employed in a purely human sense, and all intention of anticipating the judgement of the Church is utterly disclaimed.



# KONNERSREUTH

## CHAPTER I

### WITNESSES OF THE PASSION

THE case of the stigmatist of Konnersreuth that has caused so great a disturbance not only in Europe but all over the world is by no means the first of its kind. Nor would it have attracted so much attention had it not occurred at a time when such things are relegated, with a sort of proud insolence, to the domain of fairy tales and legends. 'Cases like that happened in olden days, but now, in the century of progress,' reasons the modern mind, 'it is impossible.' The historical evidence for an immense number of similar events is simply and flatly denied—yet Dr. Imbert-Gourbeyre was able to enumerate three hundred and twenty-one such cases. This attitude compels us to say something of them by way of introduction to our subject.

What are the stigmata? The Greek word *στίγμα* means: a prick, a spot or a sign, a wound; a mark branded on slaves. Figuratively the word is applied to the appearance of the five wounds of Christ crucified on the hands, feet, and side of those affected in a particular way by the Passion. Clement Brentano, author and poet, who wrote the Life of Anne-Catherine Emmerich, says in the preface to her Visions: 'The

number of holy people in the Catholic Church who since the time of S. Francis have attained to that degree of contemplative love of Jesus—known in theology as *Vulnus divinum* (divine wound) or *Plaga amoris viva* (living wound of love), the greatest sign of compassion with Jesus—is by no means insignificant.’ The definition of the Church is broader and more exact. ‘Stigmatisation consists in participating in the Passion of Christ in a way which is shown outwardly by marks on those parts of the body where our Saviour bore his wounds. It is a *charisma* or supernatural grace. The degree of this participation or compassion may vary. Even the exterior marks differ from one person to another.’ Thus Father O. Pfülf, S.J., speaking from a Catholic and theological point of view.

Indeed the Cross, Passion and Resurrection of Christ are the centre of the Christian faith, and S. Paul aptly sums up this truth: ‘If we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified with him.’<sup>1</sup> Is it then to be wondered at that this greatest act of our redemption has been, since the beginning, a special object of devotion for the faithful? Bernard of Clairvaux, saint and mystic, sings in a magnificent hymn of tender devotion to Our Lord’s wounds. Nor should we forget the memorable prayer popularized by S. Ignatius Loyola: ‘. . . Blood of Christ inebriate me, Water from the side of Christ wash me, Passion of Christ strengthen me. . . . Hide me within thy wounds. . . .’ It shows sufficiently and clearly what the Passion of our Saviour meant to these great souls.

The most complete statistics of the cases of stigmatisation have been drawn up by Dr. Imbert-Gourbeyre whom we have already mentioned. In addition the large book by Görres, *Die Christliche Mystik*,<sup>2</sup> cites eighty similar cases, and this number

<sup>1</sup> Rom. viii, 17.

<sup>2</sup> Mainz, 1834.



could easily be doubled. From the point of view of liberal medicine the question is treated by Jacobi<sup>1</sup> in a recent book. Of the three hundred cases he mentions, sixty only have been beatified or canonized. Among them but forty-one men; the rest are women of all conditions and ages. These cases are not limited to Europe alone. In the nineteenth century there was one in Canada, Esperanza de Jesus, and another in Ceylon, Helen Bolewatta. But what is more remarkable is the fact, universally acknowledged, that stigmatists are to be found in the Catholic Church alone. No other religion calling itself Christian can boast of a like favour.

The stigmata have never been a pleasant experience, physically, for those who have been granted them. They occasion, in fact, not a few pains and sufferings. With some they have remained until death a mystery, little understood. Many another case has been examined, and for years on end; stigmatists have even been ill-treated by doctors of their time as was Veronica Giuliani. There have also been cases of fraud discovered by the civil and ecclesiastical authorities and punished by them.

The life of the greater number, however, offers the greatest guarantee morally possible, and the Church has not hesitated to mention their stigmata in the processes of canonization, calling them *charismata superna*. This was the case with S. Catherine de Ricci. Father S. O. Braitto, O.P., has these beautiful words on the subject: 'What is supernatural in the stigmata is that they are a sign of God imprinted on the elect of Christ crucified. The way in which they have lived, interiorly, the Passion of Our Lord, is already a sign in itself of a supernatural gift. This burning love, consuming and incomprehensible, is a favour which

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Jacobi, privatdozent: *Die Stigmatisierten* (Munich, 1922).

goes beyond the natural powers of the soul. It is entirely the fruit of sanctifying grace.'

It is surprising perhaps that the first centuries of Christianity, a time when love for Our Lord was extremely fervent, and suffering for his sake was not wanting, had no examples of this reward of devotion. Nothing is heard of it, at that time, nor in the following centuries. It was not until the thirteenth century, in 1224, that S. Francis of Assisi received the stigmata on Mount Alverna in a remarkable way. The Catholic Church celebrates this event by a special feast on September 17; an account of it may be read in the second nocturn lessons appointed in the Roman Breviary for that day: 'At the sight of the Seraph, Francis felt within himself a great joy, yet coupled with it a sore compassion, to be nailed to the cross . . . this vision was granted to him that he might understand that it was not by physical martyrdom but by fervour of soul that he should be changed into a living image of Jesus Christ. . . . The spirit of Francis was burnt interiorly by a seraphic flame and his body marked exteriorly in the likeness of the Crucified . . . as if by the impression of a seal . . . and he who imprinted these seals in secret outwardly worked miracles by them. . . . Finally Pope Benedict XI decided that this extraordinary fact, attested more than once by pontifical bulls, should be celebrated by the Church each year.'

As we have already said there have been stigmatists of all ages and all stations in life. Even their outward marks—their stigmata—show numberless variations. With one it is only a case of scars or intense nervous pains, while another will have real wounds, cleavages in the flesh which bleed at regular intervals. These wounds do not fester, but neither do they heal. And as the Passion of Christ is represented even exteriorly



on the bodies of stigmatists, it has been proved that they suffer all its different phases. S. Lutgarde suffered the sweat of blood, as also did Stephana Quinzani and Margaret of Cortona. The scourging is to be found in Archangela Tordero, Ricci, del Prato, Colette ; and to an even greater degree in Gemma Galgani. The crown of thorns was imposed among others upon Catherine Racconigi, John (of the monastery of Burgos in Spain), Veronica Giuliani, Christina of Stommeln, and John Mary of the Cross at Roveredo. Among the more recent stigmatists to have experienced it we may mention the Augustinian Anne-Catherine Emmerich (she received a double crown) and Louise Lateau. The pains of carrying the Cross have not been so common, and Teresa Neumann in this respect recalls S. Catherine of Siena. The sufferings of the Belgian Lateau were similar.

With the wounds in the side we come to stigmatisation in the strict meaning of the term. But it is interesting to notice that if Our Lord's wound is on the right side there have nevertheless been stigmatists who had it on the left, as if it were an image reflected in a mirror. S. Francis of Assisi, Angela della Pace, Maria Colonna and Catherine Emmerich all had it on the right side ; Catherine of Siena, Catherine de Ricci, and Lateau on the left. With Gemma Galgani this wound was six centimetres long ; that of John Mary of the Cross penetrated into the chest as far as the aorta. The other wounds on the hands and the feet are not always marked. There are also cases of partial stigmatisation, as was the case with Blanche Gussmann ; the nun Masiena had all five wounds represented in one.

Among women stigmatists may be mentioned Queen Helen of Hungary, Osanna of Mantua, Ursula Benincasa, Marina d'Escobar, the peasant woman Dominica de Paradiso and Isabel Hendrix. Among the men

Görres cites the following : Blessed Charles of Sezze, monk and mystic, Robert de Malatesti, a member of the royal family of Rimini, the Dominican Walter of Strasbourg, the Premonstratensian lay brother Dodo, the Augustinian de Aviliana, the Capuchin Benedict of Reggia, the Franciscan Angelo del Paz, and lastly the Franciscan martyr John Graio who bore on his feet wounds about six centimetres in length.

According to the decree of Benedict XIV the stigmata alone are not sufficient grounds for canonization ; proof of the practice of heroic virtue is necessary in addition. There have been cases of fraudulent stigmatists like the nun of Cordova or another at Lisbon (mentioned by Father Pfülf, S.J.) and Teresa Staedele, Anne Moes and A. M. Kinker (cited by Jacobi). Father Braito says, and his statement is very much to the point : ‘ The stigmata in themselves do not constitute a guarantee of sanctity. The Church in canonizing stigmatists examines first of all their lives ; it is only afterwards that she takes into account their stigmata. There have, indeed, been stigmatists who have come to a bad end, not to say a scandalous one.

‘ What then is the meaning of the stigmata ? What is their purpose ? They are a manifestation of that sanctifying grace which forms devoted souls to the likeness of Christ, the model of all who suffer. The stigmata are also given for the personal sanctification of those who bear them. . . . They are a *charisma* for the edification of others . . . that is their chief purpose. The stigmata should serve as a witness to the supernatural at a time when it is treated with contempt and reckoned of little worth.’

The nineteenth century—rationalist and atheist as it was—produced nevertheless upwards of thirty stigmatists. Grabinski’s book on miracles, and that



of Jacobi on stigmatists, give ample information on this point. We shall confine ourselves here to the most startling cases.

The first example is that of the visionary, sister Anne-Catherine Emmerich, who has been the subject of endless controversies. She was born in 1774 of a poor working-class family in Westphalia, and became an Augustinian nun at Dülmen near Münster, where she died on February 9, 1824. She resembles Teresa Neumann by her crown of thorns, the recognition of relics, her visions of Our Lord's Passion, and the length of time she passed without taking food of any sort. Her cause has been introduced at Rome ; but according to the declaration of Teresa Neumann it will not be decided until the time of the second successor of the present Pope. Catherine Emmerich was twice examined by a civil commission, but no definite result was arrived at.

Then we have that group of holy women in the Tyrol : Crescentia Niklusch (born in 1816), Mary Mörl (1812-68), Mary Domenica Lazzari (1815-50). Crescentia Niklusch (of Merano) took no food other than the Blessed Sacrament and a cup of milk every day. Mary Mörl (of Bolzano) was celebrated on account of her frightful agonies on Fridays and her joyous ecstasies. Authoritative witnesses declare that from 1834 until the day of her death in 1850 she took no food whatever.

Considerations of space prevent us giving a detailed account of the facts relating to these cases. The works on the single case of Anne-Catherine Emmerich—for and against the authenticity of her stigmata—would form a small library. In addition to the Singhalese Helen Bolewatta, the Canadian Esperanza de Jesus, there was the Swiss Josephine Kümme, the French woman Bertine Bouquillon and the Italians Maria Rosa

Adriani, Maria Cherubina Clara, Helen Apollo de Monte Falto and others. Mélanie Mathieu, known as Mary of the Cross, the famous shepherdess of La Salette who was favoured with a vision of Our Lady, is particularly interesting. She died in 1904. When her tomb was opened in 1918 and her body examined, stigmata were discovered on her hands and feet, and a quantity of blood in the wounds. Austria too produced a stigmatist in Juliana Weiskirchner, born in 1824. In Germany we have Maria Beatrix Schumann who received the stigmata in 1853, Bernadette Frey, Barbara Pfister at Speyer (she died in 1909) and Anne Henle at Eichstätt. In Belgium there is Rosalie Püt who died in 1919. The Frenchwoman Marie Julie Jahenny (or Jahény, born in 1856), and who was excommunicated for ten years, was living at the beginning of 1931. But we can do no more than mention their names here and must pass over these cases, however interesting they may be, in order to mention the most recent and most interesting of all—the Belgian Louise Lateau, the Italian Gemma Galgani and her fellow-countryman the Capuchin father Pius.

Louise Lateau (1850–1883), the daughter of a poor factory worker, was at one time the object of much controversy. The discussion was taken up in scientific circles, and the famous professor Virchow compromised his reputation not a little by declaring that the whole thing was an imposture. Father Pfülf says in the notes to his book: ‘L.’s stigmata occurred on Fridays from April 26, 1868, until October 23, 1883; in all eight hundred times. Later she bled from the temples as if she had been crowned with thorns, and a wound appeared on her right shoulder. From March 30, 1871, until the day of her death, October 23, 1883, Louise, with the exception of the Holy Communion, took no food of any kind, but until the end she was in



perfect health.' The theologian who accompanied the commission sent by the bishop to examine into her case, although prejudiced against her in the beginning, came to believe finally that the manifestations were genuine, and the doctor of the commission, Dr. Lefèvre, a professor at the University of Louvain, described the phenomena in detail. At the instance of Virchow, the Royal Medical Academy of Brussels sent two of its members to examine Lateau; one was a Catholic, Dr. Warlemont, and the other Dr. Crocq du Bois-Haine, a Freemason. They declared after a searching examination and lengthy discussions at the Academy: 'The stigmata of Louise Lateau are a fact and free from deception. Medical science can give no satisfactory explanation of these phenomena.' Moreover this declaration was a unanimous one.

Next there is Gemma Galgani, daughter of a Tuscan chemist (1878-1903). Dr. Aug. Ludwig of Freilingen in his work on the case insists on the absolutely certain fact that the stigmata are only to be found in persons in a state of grace and belonging to the Catholic Church. He holds these phenomena to be *charismata*, the result, namely, of the collaboration of nature and grace. Galgani's wound in the side was six centimetres long and three wide. The stigmata began to appear on Thursday evenings; it seemed as if the skin was stretched out above the wounds. They bled, but directly after Friday's ecstasy they would begin to heal and by Sunday not a trace of them remained. In addition was to be noticed in this case the marks of the scourging and the crown of thorns.

The latest of all is Father Pius, a Capuchin of the convent of S. Giovanni Rotondo near Foggia in Apulia. In 1918, at the age of thirty-two, he received the stigmata, and with them certain spiritual gifts. A fragrant scent was given off from his body, which filled

his cell and marked his passage wherever he went. He healed the sick, told men their secrets, and predicted future events . . . he was also lifted up in the air, and went towards the altar above the heads of those present in the church. The ecclesiastical authorities submitted him to examination to verify the truth of these phenomena ; and the commission having pronounced that this favour was given to him for the sanctification of his soul he retired, under obedience, to an unknown house of his order, where hidden from the eyes of the world he can give himself over to the mystical life. And his unreserved obedience has, in the opinion of the Church, as much importance as, if not more than, the *charisma*.

We should notice that Teresa Neumann is not the first mystical flower of her native land. A Franciscan, Father Liberat Weiss (1675-1716), preceded her in the way of sacrifice by shedding his blood for the Christian faith ; he was a missionary in Abyssinia.

Then, only a few years ago, there was another stigmatist living in Bavaria : Anne Schäffer, born in 1882, who died in 1925. She was obliged to spend two years in hospital by reason of severe burns to her feet caused by boiling water. Recovering to a certain extent she went back to her work, but after only a few days her wounds re-opened and for twenty-three years she suffered horribly ; the skin had entirely disappeared from her feet and her wounds suppurated continually. Every five days she had to submit to a disinfecting treatment which was a veritable torture.

On October 4, 1910, she received stigmata. For the last three years of her life she suffered continually, and that in almost every part of her body. She was subject to continual and severe convulsions which occurred nearly every hour.

The most extraordinary thing is that she received



the stigmata in continuation from another Bavarian stigmatist, Barbara Pfister (died March 9, 1909), and at her death she bequeathed this glorious privilege to Teresa Neumann. (Lent 1926.)

It is no less extraordinary that—by a species of heavenly telepathy—Teresa learnt in one of her visions (October 8, 1927) that there were three stigmatists living at the time. Herself, a person in Italy and another in America. What, therefore, was the surprise of those who had heard this assertion when they read in the *Era Nova* (a Catholic paper in Bahia) a letter from Mgr Baretto, Bishop of Campinas, giving official confirmation to the fact that there was in Campinas a missionary sister (her name is Sister Amalia of the Scourging) who bore the stigmata.

‘The stigmata, an effect of the Passion of Christ in the course of centuries, have had as their end the moral regeneration not only of an individual, but of society at large. And it is incontestable that even the most recent stigmatists have made no small impression on souls. Indeed they have contributed to the reawakening of religious life among the masses.’ (Pföf.)



## CHAPTER II

### TERESA NEUMANN'S YOUTH

‘**B**LESSED are the poor in spirit.’ There is perhaps no text of Holy Scripture which has been so much ridiculed and despised by so-called intellectuals. Without attempting here a refutation of their principles we can nevertheless state as a fact worthy of remark that it is generally to simple souls that visions and apparitions are granted, and that it is these souls which attain in their spiritual life to a state of wisdom and enlightenment inaccessible to others more richly endowed with natural gifts.

This is confirmed by Our Lord’s utterance—a seeming paradox—in which he praised his Eternal Father for having hid the secrets of the Kingdom of God from the wise and prudent and having revealed them to little ones. So it is that a simple lay brother, the porter of his convent, Alphonsus Rodriguez, S.J., wrote one of the most beautiful and at the same time one of the most spiritual of books, his *Exercise of Christian Perfection*, which is a valuable mystical work. On the other hand what numbers of atheists and rationalists have seen fit to attack Blessed Bernadette Soubirous precisely because of her simplicity and child-like humility; the very qualities which made her worthy to witness the splendours of the Immaculate Conception. What a wonderful degree of openness was that which distinguished the little shepherd girl of La Salette. To continue the argument, why is it that S. Teresa of the

Child Jesus insisted always on the necessity of our becoming like a little child if we are to obtain advancement in the spiritual life? Why is it that the mystics of no matter what epoch or nation return again and again to the subject of spiritual childhood? Or again, why have they repeated so often: 'My God, thou art all, and I am nothing?' Why do they do all in their power to exterminate completely their personality, their own will and all that is theirs?

It is because this humility, abasement, this annihilation of self, are the necessary conditions for the light of grace to dwell in the heart of man. It is the only way to attain to the heights and far-away splendours of the supernatural world; the sole means of arriving at the end of all mysticism which is nothing else than the experimental knowledge of God. This knowledge is already attracting the attention of non-Catholic circles: witness, for example, the world congress of philosophy held in New York in 1927. Indeed the paradox begins to become clearer and we can understand why it is that God chooses the weak ones of this world to confound the wise; the men of science who, supposedly, know all, or at least count on knowing to-morrow what they do not know to-day.

A simple country girl, educated in the only class of the local elementary school, has become the object of the attention of savants and ecclesiastical authorities. It will be useful, perhaps, to give here a short sketch of her life. Teresa Neumann was born at Konnersreuth, a village of nine hundred and fifty-two souls, according to the Bavarian directory published in 1927. It is situated at a distance of six kilometres from Waldsassen near the Czecho-Slovakian frontier, and thirteen kilometres by rail from Cheb. In the main street of the village on the left coming from Waldsassen can be seen the little stone house belonging to Teresa's father, a



poor country tailor who had to eke out his meagre livelihood by doing the work of an agricultural labourer; he led a life that knew no leisure.

There at one o'clock in the morning, April 9, 1898 (Holy Saturday in that year), was born Teresa, the eldest of a family of ten, all of whom are now living in robust health—physically and morally. She was christened after S. Teresa of Avila, the reformer of the Carmelites and the founder of the Discalced branch of that order. Growing up amidst conditions of the most abject poverty, according to the details furnished by Father Geiger, the rector of the Cathedral at Bamberg, when not at school she had to help her parents in caring for the younger children and assisting with the work in the fields. She attended the village school, which though providing two classes for boys, has but one for girls. Apart from the church, the clergy-house and the post office we can look in vain for other vestiges of civilization in this little village. There is not even the doctor who may be found in the other but little more important villages.

At school she showed no striking ability. Nor in her religious life was there anything extraordinary: no special aptitude, no trace of unbalance. In her free time she helped her parents, working in the fields of a local farmer for a wage of sixty pfenigs an afternoon. Teresa left school in 1912, and entered the service of Martin Neumann (he was no relation), a small farmer and innkeeper in her native village. The present writer had the opportunity of visiting his house, where to this day two of Teresa's sisters are employed. Lodged by night in an attic, she lived by day the hard life, full of sacrifice, of a country servant. Six years she worked at the inn, and during the war when her father (in the artillery) and her employer were called to the front she carried on the work of the farm,

attending at the same time to the wants of the customers at the inn. It seems that her work at this time was irreproachable and neither laziness nor weakness of character can be laid to her count. In fact the statements of Father Geiger prove this amply. She ploughed, harrowed, mowed and thrashed, without a murmur. Nor did she give in to even heavier tasks; she would carry up to the loft alone and unaided, sacks weighing eighty kilograms. In fact hers was the monotonous and uninteresting life of so many hundreds and thousands of poor peasants of whom nothing is heard.

It seemed more than probable that the details of Teresa's life, her eight years' illness and her inexplicable cures would have remained for ever obscure. For was it not the case of an unknown country servant girl suffering from an enigmatic disease which from the very beginning had been insufficiently observed? Surprise, therefore, was general when a Protestant, Dr. Gerlich, brought out his large work of some seven hundred pages. After several journeys to Konnersreuth and a period of five months spent in continual contact with the stigmatist, he set out to throw some light on this difficult period in the history of the case. His painstaking research is to the point and has cleared up so many doubtful issues, that we were obliged to recast this chapter for the present edition: Dr. Gerlich's work has, from a medical point of view, made us reconsider a great deal of what was said in earlier editions of this book. We are very glad to acknowledge here our indebtedness to the former editor of the *Neueste Nachrichten* for his work compiled with such accuracy and care.

Dr. Gerlich has been able to show us the precise beginning of the whole affair, hidden and unknown at first, which has made the entire world wonder. For



did not this simple country maid enter suddenly on a life of suffering, into that crucible where by purifying fire the soul is purged like a precious metal of all impurities and is made ready for the sublime rôle marked out for it by Providence? The following is based on Gerlich's account of the case.

On March 10, 1918, Teresa, who worked on the farm of her namesake Neumann, got up at five to do her work of tending the cattle before going to the church to communicate. She was still fasting and just about to leave when the alarm was given that a fire had broken out in stables of the neighbouring house, which were in the yard, and had reached the barn which was close to the Neumanns' farm. Teresa's employer was at that time on leave from the front. On her suggestion, climbing up on to the roof of the wooden shed which was in danger, he fixed himself at the very top (which was some nine feet from the ground) in order to throw water on the sparks and burning débris which were, literally, raining down on the shed. As Teresa Neumann is scarcely five and a half feet in height she got on to a stool (used in the café as a support for beer barrels) which raised her nearly two feet, and for two hours (ten to midday), wet through and fasting, did not stop handing up tubs of water weighing between thirty and forty pounds, and that at a height of more than six feet. It was particularly laborious work. We would advise all those spoilt psycho-analysts and doctors who, settled comfortably in their arm-chairs by the fire, with an air of infallibility diagnose hysteria in this robust country maid, and talk to us about perceptions buried in the depths of the subconscious, to try, if only for a quarter of an hour, this violent form of exercise. One must have lived in the country to understand the toil and fatigue of the daily life of these peasants.



Just before midday on this cold winter Sunday (we should bear in mind the rude climate of the Fichtelgebirge) Teresa tried to lift a tub of water even higher than before. At the same moment she felt a sharp pain in the back and in the loins on the left side. Dropping the tub she slid off the stool; she had hardly the strength to escape a bad fall. As she was unable to stand upright she could not go on with her work, and suffering great pain she dragged herself, bent and leaning to the left, to her home. From this hour began her Calvary which after long years of unhappiness and pain ended in the representation of the centuries-old drama of Golgotha.

At this point we must insist on the fact that until the date of the fire Teresa Neumann had been in the best of health and was mentally quite normal. Now she was in no state to undertake her usual work for some time, and her sister Otila took her place in the fields and at the inn. Nevertheless, after some days' rest Teresa tried once more to go back to work. Neither she nor her family attached much importance to this strain, so much so that neglect of the results of this first accident was the cause of a whole series of others, more dangerous and more far-reaching in their results. In addition to a certain heaviness of the legs which made walking painful there arose stomach trouble and nausea, which, however, soon disappeared. The absence of her father and her employer as well as the pressing needs of a large and poor family did not allow Teresa to take care of herself for long. Moreover inaction was difficult to such a generous and vigorous character. Soon, then, she went back to work.

It was April. Teresa was busy in the cellar preparing the seed potatoes for planting. After filling a basket weighing some fifty pounds she emptied it into a sack,

As beforehand she had been able to carry sacks of wheat weighing upwards of twelve stone to the loft, she considered a mere three and a half nothing at all. But at the sixth step a sharp pain in the loins made her lose her balance ; she fell backwards and lay there unconscious on the first step, which was very broad, the back of her neck bathed in blood. She was found about an hour afterwards. Thus another accident, more disastrous and serious, followed as a direct result of the little attention paid to that of March. The wound in the back of the neck healed in a few days : but recovery from the pains in the head, the nausea, and stomach trouble brought on by this accident was not accomplished so quickly. In fact her health grew steadily worse and after ten days of fruitless treatment at home she had to be transferred to the hospital at Waldsassen, where she was under treatment at the hands of Dr. Göbel, Dr. Seidl's *locum tenens*, for a 'dropped stomach.' This was from April 23 to June 10. During the treatment, at home as well as at the hospital, she was able to hide by prolonged fasts the most uncomfortable part of her sufferings : involuntary discharge of the contents of the bladder and the intestines. This fact is of capital importance in determining the nature of the disease because it accompanies lesions of the inferior vertebral column or the spine. Teresa left the hospital—she had been sent there at the expense of the agricultural insurance—without being cured and without even an improvement in her state. On the contrary, after one or two sharp and imprudent movements of the back she had three attacks of convulsions in which she became completely unconscious. It is worthy of remark that it is by this very fact of the loss of consciousness that epileptic crises can be distinguished from those of hysteria. In the latter there is no unconsciousness.



As a result of these facts established by Dr. Gerlich, who has thus been able to reconstruct for us the character of the disease from which Teresa was suffering before the reception of the stigmata, no doctor could possibly think of terming her malady hysteria. This observation of Gerlich's is important, all the more as it calls to account the authority of Dr. Ewald, Professor at the University of Erlangen, who tries to close this interesting and enigmatic case once and for all by pronouncing the word hysteria. The present writer must acknowledge that in the earlier editions of this book he considered as inadmissible any hypothesis of injury, dislocation, or fracture of the vertebral column, this organ being too solid and resistant for a strain of any kind to cause a lesion. Such an idea seemed to us naive and untenable until Dr. Gerlich produced such a mass of proofs and documents culled from the whole gamut of medical literature, that a luxation of the second and third lumbar vertebræ followed by a lesion of the spinal cord or the nerves surrounding it appeared to us not only possible, but more than probable. All the more as the diagnosis had already been given by Dr. Burkhart of Hohenelbe near Eger, who was able to see the patient and to treat her for three months during the most typical epoch of the disease.

Dr. Gerlich has even been able to convince us that by a simple strain or apparently slight lesion of the vertebral column bleeding or even contusion of the spine may result, which produces in its turn extraordinary effects very similar to those we have already mentioned in the first edition of this book. He was able to prove that the first lesion of the vertebral column for want of treatment became very prejudicial to Teresa's health, and that on account of the accidents which followed she ended by being not only paralysed but condemned, inevitably, to an early death.

Thus she left the hospital uncured, though she had probably derived some benefit from the several weeks' rest. As she could no longer labour in the fields she helped in the work in the home. We should not forget another significant phenomenon: after her accident in April Teresa was no longer subject to menstruation, and to this day it has not reappeared.

The patient continued to perform light household duties. On August 1, 1918, she went to the wood-shed to fetch some bundles of straw which were hanging at a height of six feet, from a rafter. She went up a ladder and threw down the straw, but in coming down she lost her balance and fell backwards, striking her head against the hard floor of the shed. Once again she lay for more than an hour unconscious and in the throes of convulsions. Her mother coming back from the fields found her and carried her to bed, where she stayed for several days. As a consequence of this accident Teresa continued to be subject to convulsions, unconsciousness, pains in the eyes and weakening sight; she was unable to bend, and in addition the involuntary discharges of the bladder and intestines became worse.

On the eve of an important feast at Konnersreuth—the dedication of the church—Teresa, who had plucked a goose at her former employer's house, went up to the loft to put the feathers into a sack hanging from a rafter. To reach it she put her foot on a beam, but just at that moment an acute pain in the loins caused her to lose her balance and tumble to the floor. Once more she was unconscious and lay there twisting in convulsions. Her sisters finding her were obliged to half carry, half drag her back to the house; Teresa had completely lost the use of her legs. After this accident her sight was so bad that she saw only those persons who were quite near her, and then not clearly, but



blurred. On October 10, as she greatly desired to go to church, she was carried there by her sisters, but once arrived was so ill that she had to return home. She became much worse and to such a degree that she was unable to recognize her father, who had unexpectedly returned from the front. On Tuesday, October 22, she received the last sacraments.

At this time Konnersreuth experienced with the rest of Europe the scourge of influenza. Who indeed can forget this disease which travelled from country to country, leaving victims wherever it went? The whole Neumann family suffered from it. The mother in order to look after her daughter more conveniently decided to carry her down to the kitchen. She took her in her arms in such a manner that Teresa's head rested on her shoulder. Her legs hung loose. But her nurse's ignorance cost the patient dear: for nine days she suffered from convulsions without regaining consciousness. The intestines and the bladder continued to be upset as well as the sight.

So from October 22, 1918, Teresa became definitely bedridden. On account of her acute pains in the loins she could not even sit up straight or turn over on her side. During these pains she became unconscious and her muscles were either twisted with convulsions or completely paralysed. On one occasion she broke her front teeth and on another she bit her tongue badly. Dr. Burkhart, who was in charge of the case from March to September, diagnosed a dislocation of the second and third lumbar vertebræ; he showed clearly, moreover, that there was a lesion of the vertebral column or the spine. Unfortunately in January 1919 he also was struck down by influenza; his death on February 11 removed an important witness, as he died without giving the reasons for his diagnosis. It was only after him that Dr. Seidl of



Waldsassen undertook the case at the expense of Teresa's medical insurance.

In all former editions of this book we energetically opposed any attempt to explain Teresa's blindness by hysteria, and we based our conclusion on the statements of experts who tell us that complete blindness in both eyes is never caused by hysteria. On this point also Dr. Gerlich has furnished us with useful proofs ; now, moreover, we know the exact cause and the date of this sudden loss of vision.

In the evening of March 17, 1919, her mother was arranging the poor girl's bed ; she was put upon the commode and her father supported her back. But he was obliged to leave her for an instant. Teresa lost her balance and fell backwards, hitting her head against the kitchen doorpost in the first place, and then heavily against the floor. Once more unconsciousness and convulsions were the result, and these lasted several days. She felt as ' if her eyes would come out of their sockets,' and from then onwards she was unable to distinguish darkness from light. She would ask for the light to be turned on when the sun was shining brightly . . . she had become completely blind.

Two more accidents made her health even more precarious. Once in playing with her little brothers, and another time while feeding her tame pigeon (in April and May 1919) she fell out of bed. The trunk hung down inanimate from the bed while the legs and lower part of the body remained above. Thus a new lesion of the vertebral column brought on complete paralysis of the left leg. In addition the left arm became paralysed. Teresa could no longer speak or hear and but for her mother's tears and the touch of her father's hand she would not have perceived the existence of the world in which she was living, half corpse-like as she was.

A certain proof that she was suffering from a disease of the spine were the eschars ; these appear very rarely in hysterical patients. She was afflicted in this way in 1919, and by the month of March of that same year on her back they were as large as the palm of a hand. The disorders of the bladder and intestines continued. In 1924 Teresa fell from her bed in the course of a convulsive fit. The tendons of her left knee contracted, thus fixing the left foot under the right thigh. The weight of the thigh ulcerated the whole of the back of the foot ; it was one mass of suppurating wound. In addition there was a purulent eschar on both sides of the sacrum as big as the palm of the hand, and there were two others on the shoulder blades. Poisoned by such reservoirs of bacteria, in accordance with all medical knowledge and experience it certainly seemed that Teresa was inevitably doomed to an early death.

How did this young girl, who enjoyed formerly such vigorous health, accept this sad fate ? How did her parents and the rest of her family accept this suffering ; to have one of its members bedridden for several years, unable to earn her living and a continual charge on others ? Did not Teresa finally become, resigned and patient though she might be, a heavy and disagreeable burden ?

The present writer has no hesitation in asserting that nowhere has he seen so shining an example of Christian charity. What a difference, indeed, to that frame of mind which would legalize the killing of incurables. The poor family, twelve in number, murmured not at all against this misfortune sent them by God. On the contrary, far from being a burden Teresa became for all the focus of their loving attention ; her family vied with each other in serving her and endeavouring to relieve her sufferings. Indeed it seems that only



Christians could love in such a way. Already Konnersreuth has charmed us by this aspect, the radiance and the warmth of the affection shown to the invalid. A manifestation of love which in our times is becoming a thing of great rarity.

But the patient herself gives us a wonderful example of Christian heroism. This peasant girl accepted nobly the complete wreck of her health, and the total destruction of her dreams and aspirations. Her great and inexhaustible faith in God was her only stay in this terrible trial, so that she had complete confidence in her Creator.

What splendid pages are those in which Dr. Gerlich, Protestant though he is, describes all these things, making us feel indeed the warmth of this poor family's Christian charity. Teresa suffering, Teresa making the sacrifice of her life moves us almost as much as the picture of Teresa in ecstasy contemplating the mystery of the Saviour's death. In fact, viewed from this angle Konnersreuth becomes for all those who suffer a veritable source of blessing, for all those who have to renounce the aspirations of a lifetime, a true benediction.

We return to the consideration of the poor creature who was slowly but surely approaching her end. The blood-poisoning set up by the eschars became evident from the different changes in her condition. Not only was it certain that she was suffering from ulcers in the stomach, which caused her to vomit blood, some partly digested, some quite fresh, but also by reason of the unpleasant smell of the pus it appeared certain that the abscess in the diaphragm had opened. In 1924 she suffered terribly from quinsy, a suppurating inflammation of the right ear, boils on the cornea, rheumatism, especially in the joints, and heart trouble. The neurasthenic character of her disease (paralysis of the

face, loss of hearing, impossibility of speaking, vertigo, etc.) gave way to a general weakening due to the poisoning of the body by bacteria. This is a very ordinary sight in general medical practice, and is a warning of the speedy deliverance of the patient by the hand of death.

Our own experience during the Great War taught us much concerning diseases of this nature, and having judged Dr. Gerlich's deductions in the light of this knowledge we are in entire agreement with them. The inexplicable cure of the blindness and the paralysis of the legs together with the disappearance of the general weakness which seemed a sign of an inevitably early death, is extraordinarily moving. In the first editions of this book we insisted on the impossibility of a natural explanation of the cure of the eschars (at the beginning of May 1925) and the abscess of the appendix (November 13, 1925). We were all the happier then to read Dr. Gerlich's very complete and conscientious account in which, on the basis of professional documents, and with rigorous logic, he has reconstructed the facts from the very beginning, to such effect that no impartial medical man could deny them without at the same time contradicting the evidence of his own eyes. We cannot praise this work sufficiently, so carefully has it been compiled. It has produced a revolution and completely changed the opinion of experts on Konnersreuth. Dr. Gerlich pushes all the statements to their logical conclusion, and however sceptical may be his adversaries they cannot but acknowledge that all that he deduces is in accordance with the evidence.

The fact can no longer be seriously questioned that Teresa Neumann was suffering from a luxation in the lumbar section of the vertebral column and that this luxation had brought on a lesion of the nerves at this



spot between the vertebræ, affecting the extremity of the spine ; this was shown by its bleeding. All of which was the direct result of the two hours of immense strain during the fatal fire. This theory cannot be refuted with such ease and so little science as Professor Ewald would have us imagine. Professor Hothaft of the University of Munich admits as certain the fact of an injury to the spine, and Dr. Gerlich cites the cure of a similar case in which the subject carrying a heavy burden had slipped and fallen, injuring even the bone of the vertebral column, as was shown by the X-ray photographs of the case. But even in the case of there being no injury to the vertebral column itself a brusque movement would suffice to burst a capillary vessel by an unnatural elongation of the spine, thus bringing on a whole crop of nervous lesions. These are very rare cases, almost unknown to doctors. All the same that does not excuse a university professor, like Dr. Ewald, who is, as Dr. Gerlich very justly points out, a specialist in nervous diseases. Such a disease, in fact, may very easily escape one, but does not that call for all the greater care in research and examination ? The want of this has vitiated Ewald's presentation of the case ; this becomes all the more evident after the discoveries made by Dr. Gerlich. (See page 303 of the second volume of his book.)

Authentic cases of such lesions of the spine and the vertebral column are extraordinarily interesting on account of their infinite variety. Confronted with the very logical presentation of the facts given us by Dr. Gerlich we felt bound to accept his deductions ; to accept, that is, that Teresa suffered from an injury of the second and third lumbar vertebræ, accompanied, perhaps, by a slight fracture of the facets of the joints and bruising of the nerves which are to be found in this place. This theory is confirmed by the fact of the

bladder and the intestinal trouble which had passed unnoticed before Gerlich's work appeared. Moreover it is only by a lesion of the vertebral column that Teresa's other accidents can be explained; on each occasion they occurred when after its original and uncared-for injury it was expected to carry a load too heavy for it: naturally it gave way under the strain. This was the case when in April 1918 she fell backwards from the steps into the cellar. This brings us to another fact, equally important; the injury of the head, if there was not, as seems likely, a fracture of the bone called occipital, which most certainly brought on concussion of the brain. This circumstance clarified for us sufficiently the fits of convulsions accompanied by unconsciousness, this last fact proving that they could only be epileptic in character. In this connection, again we must protest against Dr. Ewald's conclusions: he was unable to distinguish between fits which were the result of an accident and hysteria, or in other words between a disease arising from injuries to certain organs, and one which is caused by their defective functioning. None of these things can improve the professor's scientific reputation.

The concussion of the brain increased after each new accident. In addition the probable fracture of the skull (on March 17, 1919) considered with the original injuries to the head was almost certainly responsible for the complete loss of sight which came about so suddenly. This phenomenon, as well as the enormous eschars which consequently poisoned the whole system, prove undoubtedly that we have to deal with a disease of the spine. Hysteria, thanks to the observations made by Gerlich, is absolutely untenable. By throwing such light on the question, the former editor of the *Münchener Nachrichten* has rendered incalculable service to Konnersreuth.



After having thus examined the problem of Teresa before she received the stigmata we must complete the picture and tell our readers of some other facts in this connection which are as wonderful as they are humanly inexplicable. We are glad to observe once more that our opinion has been confirmed by that of Gerlich.

On April 29, 1923, before daybreak Teresa's father left to go to the doctor's for some medicine. When he went to say good-bye to her she was unable to see him. Afterwards she fell asleep for a moment or two and awoke a little after six o'clock. Suddenly she found herself able to see her hands. She called her sister Crescentia by knocking on the floor with a stick. But when she came Teresa was unable to recognize her, so greatly had she grown and altered in the four years and one month of the invalid's blindness.

All this happened suddenly, after a radiant vision in which Teresa showed her complete submission to the will of God. She had heard a voice saying: 'Little Teresa, do you wish to be cured?' 'I accept all with pleasure,' she answered, 'to live or to die, to be in good health or in bad. The good God knows well what is best for me.' This beginning of her cure coincides exactly with the day on which the Holy Father beatified the venerable Discalced Carmelite of Lisieux—the day when that religious, so loved by Teresa during the whole period of her illness on account of her simplicity and depth of soul, was raised to the altars of the Church.

Freed thus from her greatest suffering she gave herself all the more joyfully to her prayers, even in the midst of her worst pains. It is interesting to notice that in cases of hysterical paralysis there are never sores set up by being too long confined to bed, but that with Teresa they were large and numerous, such indeed as are found in the most serious cases of disease of the



spine. But in his account of the case Professor Ewald continues to take no notice of them in order to uphold his thesis that Teresa was hysterical. He leaves aside a phenomenon that he cannot explain : the sudden cure of these sores, that of the left foot on May 3 and the others on May 17, 1925.

With regard to the cure of the ulcerated wound which covered the back of the left foot and which resisted all treatment (in April 1925 Dr. Seidl proposed to amputate the foot) Dr. Gerlich agrees with what we have already said on the subject in former editions of this work. Within the space of twelve hours (thus twelve hours less than we said in the preceding editions) after the application of the rose petal from the tomb of S. Teresa of the Child Jesus the sore became covered with a film, thus healing up entirely. We repeat here our denial of Dr. Ewald's statement which we have already published in the *Konnersreuther Sonntagsblatt*—this is a periodical published at Konnersreuth dealing with the events which take place there—that in our medical knowledge and experience there is no example of so rapid a cure of an ulcerated sore of this sort ; ordinarily they require weeks and even months to heal completely.

On Sunday, May 17, 1925, at two o'clock in the afternoon—the very moment that the little Discalced Carmelite was being canonized at S. Peter's, Rome—a most extraordinary event took place in Teresa's tiny room. Her parents were saying the May devotions together when suddenly the invalid cried out ; it seemed as if she were in the middle of a conversation with someone. And all at once she sat up and demanded to get up and walk. Nevertheless she reported to the parish priest and the nursing sister of Mellersdorf, who had come with all haste, the conversation she had had in the vision : ' You will experience a little joy, sit up,

I will help you ; but you will suffer still a great deal and no doctor will be able to relieve you. It is only by suffering that you will be able to go forward . . . for by it many more souls are saved than by the best of sermons. Thus have I already written. . . . Also you will be able to walk . . .’ Having recounted this Teresa, leaning on her father and sister, got up and walked across the room. It may be mentioned that later the parish priest found in the works of S. Teresa of the Child Jesus (in the sixth letter to missionaries) part of the utterance quoted above. The six witnesses of the scene affirmed that Teresa’s countenance was literally illuminated, as if shone upon by a very strong light. The invalid sat down, stretched her contracted leg, and then, after six years of complete inertia, was able to rise to her feet unaided. By degrees her strength came back. At first she went on crutches, and it was only on the anniversary of the saint’s death (September 30, 1925)—after a truly wonderful vision—that she was able to walk freely. She heard a voice issuing from a light she described as being as bright as the sun : ‘ This suffering will pass but another will come. Place yourself unreservedly under the direction of your confessor. Die to yourself more and more, but keep always the simplicity of a little child.’

And in fact this suffering was not long in coming. At the beginning of November in the same year Teresa fell ill with a high temperature accompanied with pains in the stomach. As she got no better her parents at the end of a week called in Dr. Seidl from the clinic at Waldsassen. He came to see her on November 13, 1925, in the evening, and diagnosed at once inflammation of the appendix and a dangerous abscess. Her condition was so serious that he insisted on her being transferred at once to the hospital for an operation, without which, he said, she would almost surely die



that same night. The doctor left at once to prepare what would be necessary for the operation, and while her father was looking for a car to take his daughter to the hospital, Teresa's mother prepared her clothes. Simple peasant as she was, she was horrified at the thought that her daughter was going to be 'butchered.' The patient was touched by her mother's tears and asked the parish priest's permission to implore once more the aid of the Little Flower. The permission was granted. Taking a relic of the saint (one of her hairs) she placed it on the inflamed part of the abdomen. Immediately she sat up in bed and was heard to say several times 'Really?' as if speaking to someone. Questioned afterwards as to what had happened she said she saw a small gentle hand come down towards her, and that she heard a voice say, 'So that the world may know that there is a higher power you shall not be operated upon. Get up at once and go and give thanks in the church. At once. It is only in this way that you can help with the salvation of others. But keep always the simplicity of a little child.'

All this took place between six and seven o'clock in the evening. The patient who before could scarcely move from exhaustion and whose mouth had been covered with sores wanted to go to the church. It is worthy of remark that Konnersreuth is situated some two thousand feet above sea level and that it is bleak and cold. Her mother was astounded. Go out into the freezing air after such fevers? But Teresa would not give way. That very evening, to the wonder of the whole village, Teresa, her family and the parish priest gave thanks at the foot of the altar for such a wonderful cure. Nor is that all. After midnight, towards two o'clock, a quantity of purulent matter was discharged by the intestine, through which the abscess had forced an outlet. The next day Teresa and her father presented



themselves at the hospital, where the surgeon could hardly believe his eyes to see her cured so suddenly. After these events Teresa suffered no more from this disease.

This last fact is so extraordinary that we are compelled to insist upon it a little, chiefly because the adversaries of Konnersreuth cannot, logically, admit it in their hypothesis. They are determined to leave aside all that savours of the supernatural. Professor Ewald, especially, contrives to rid himself of it with little trouble. What? A psychiatrist would wish to depreciate or doubt the evidence of a surgeon—a specialist in his branch—obtained from an examination of the patient's rectum. All who know anything of specialists in Germany will agree that a specialist in one branch of medicine, in another not his own may be little different from a layman. Professor Ewald will pardon us, then, if we doubt his experience, and all the more as he expresses himself in such terms as he does on page 22 of his book. The present writer was already a surgeon before the war, and at Ledesma in the Argentine had a whole clinic under his care. During the war he took the place of a university professor, M. Kukula, and was afterwards surgeon-in-chief to the Seventh Austrian Army. With such experience, gained by daily contact with this disease, he feels qualified to state that it is extremely rare (it happens once, perhaps, in several thousand cases) that a cure takes place of itself by the abscess penetrating to the interior of the intestine, without invading the peritoneum and thus causing death.

In the last Czech edition of this work we mentioned a case in which all hope had been abandoned, and whose life was saved by the prayers of the father, an orthodox Jew. But in this, as in all similar cases, there was a long convalescence. It was entirely wanting in Teresa's

instance. The professor passes over in silence the most important fact of all, namely, that the pus was discharged five or six hours *after* her visit to the church. In his psychiatric clinic, doubtless, Professor Ewald has never come across a patient convalescent after appendicitis ; otherwise he would not be guilty of such medical nonsense as to say that ' all pain disappeared after the evacuation of the abscess, and it is not to be wondered at that Teresa could go immediately to church.' Indeed it is an easy doctrine : it is a pity that it exists solely in the professor's imagination. We have shown, thus, that Teresa's cure before the evacuation of the abscess—an instantaneous cure, and one without convalescence (the second time this has happened to her)—is without parallel in the annals of medicine, and that science cannot give us a satisfactory explanation of it.

Having well pondered these facts we could not but share the view of Father Th. Geiger of Bamberg who as a fearless defender of Teresa Neumann has not hesitated to correct the professor at all necessary points. He says notably :

' I questioned Teresa and let her describe her state of living martyrdom to me. I was profoundly moved, not by compassion merely, but to see how God prepared for his own this soul which was plunged in the night of suffering and helplessness, deprived of the power of sight, that she might at last be able to support his countless graces showered upon her, so that many a lost sheep might be brought back to the fold. Paralysed, she lay covered with festering sores which gave off an unpleasant odour ; blind, deaf, and dumb, she hardly knew if anyone noticed the only hand she could move to indicate her wants. I asked her : " What did you feel within yourself in

this state of darkness ; were you not afraid ? ”—  
“No,” she answered, “for I could always think of God  
very easily. But when my mother cried over me,  
then indeed I was sorrowful.”<sup>1</sup>

Can anyone be so outrageous as to revile such a  
martyr and to call her a fraud ?

<sup>1</sup> *Die Stigmatisierte von Konnersreuth*, page 50.



## CHAPTER III

### LOVE'S REWARD

**I**N the midst of most awful physical sufferings and, humanly speaking, the absence of all hope of recovery, Teresa's heart was filled with a love for her Saviour which knew no bounds nor restrictions. She resigned herself entirely to his will. Now after long years full of all sorts of pains and miseries, she was rewarded in a fashion which entirely recompensed her for her sufferings. This was nothing else than the receiving of the exterior signs of active participation in the Passion of Christ. (It is thus that Father Braiton, O.P., defines the stigmata.) It came about suddenly, and in such a way that neither she nor her family understood at first what was happening.

*Signasti, Domine, servum tuum Franciscum signis redemptionis nostræ*, sings the Church in her liturgy. 'Thou hast sealed thy servant Francis with the seals of our redemption,' to show forth his close union with Jesus Christ crucified ! Now this distinction, considered so remarkable by the Church, was bestowed upon a simple peasant girl of Konnersreuth who seemed to be the prey of all diseases together ; a lowly peasant girl who did not desire these exterior marks of divine grace, because they would hinder her in her daily life, and because they were not borne by her model, S. Teresa of the Child Jesus, above whose simple state she did not aspire. According to the witness of several people Teresa Neumann had never read any of the

books which treat of mystics and stigmatists. There have been many saints whose most ardent desire was to bear upon their bodies the exterior marks of Our Lord's Passion and whose prayer was not heard. In this case, on the evidence of her spiritual director, the desire had not been formed, yet heaven granted this immense grace.

It took place in the following manner. It was about mid-Lent 1926. Teresa was sleeping peacefully when suddenly she saw our Saviour kneeling, praying on the Mount of Olives. She saw distinctly the trees, the garden, and the disciples on the ground asleep. At the same time she felt a sharp pain in her left side whence blood began to flow drop by drop. This bleeding continued until midday. She did not even notice what day of the week it was, but the Friday of the following week the same thing happened, and this time she witnessed the scourging of Christ at the pillar. The third week it was the crowning with thorns, and the fourth the carrying of the cross. The fifth week it was Good Friday (April 17, 1926), and this day was set apart for something even more extraordinary.

Above the heart to the left, between the fourth and fifth rib, and quite near the breast-bone she still bore the wound received in the first vision. It had not healed, and Teresa with the concurrence of her sister Crescentia had been very careful to hide it. During the ecstasy of Good Friday her eyes began to bleed, and on the back of her hands and feet appeared little round wounds which also bled. Her parents, astonished and frightened, in haste called the parish priest Naber. He alone understood what it was, but was so astounded that it was some minutes before he could recover himself.

Since April 17, 1926, the visions have taken place almost regularly, beginning on the Thursday at mid-



night. Thus Teresa, involuntarily, participates in the Passion of Christ as a spectator, and always her greatest sorrow is her powerlessness to stop the sufferings of him whom she loves.

As the wounds caused Teresa to suffer and prevented her from walking (she is obliged to walk on her heels) efforts were made to make them heal up. For this purpose an ointment prepared by Dr. Seidl and other remedies were used, but without success, and finally the project was abandoned. The wounds do not suppurate, but neither do they cicatrize, nor yet are they inflamed: three characteristic symptoms of the real stigmata.

In the autumn of the same year (1926) Teresa's participation in the passion and death of Our Lord became more complete, and in an extraordinary way. She fell ill with bronchial pneumonia, and her heart was so weak, that, as it seemed she was in danger, the last Sacraments were given her. On November 5, or according to others, 19, a blessed candle was put into her hands and the prayers for the dying were recited. Suddenly her face lit up, and letting fall the candle she knelt up straight in her bed; high up all around the scalp appeared eight or ten spots, each streaming with blood. The stigmata had been enriched by the crown of thorns which bleeds every Friday during Teresa's ecstasy.

These *charismata* were increased once more during the Holy Week of 1927 when Teresa contemplated the Passion for a long time on end. Once again the circulation of the blood became feeble and her feet swelled. She did not come to herself on the Good Friday afternoon nor during all Holy Saturday. But on Easter Day she got up at five o'clock in the morning in good health saying that she had seen the burial of Our Lord and his glorious resurrection. According to the evidence of Professor Pabstmann (of Bamberg) and



of Father Urban, O.F.M., both of whom were there when she regained consciousness, the stigmata had pierced through her hands and feet from one side to the other.

We have, then, to deal with a case of stigmatisation which is extraordinarily complete, a very rare occurrence. The visible wounds, however, are not all; no less important are those Friday ecstasies by which, according to Mgr. Kiefer, stigmatists live through Our Lord's Passion with him, not only as eye-witnesses, but also by that extreme compassion which has its reaction on their own soul and body.

The phenomena described below prove the justice of the Church's view that the stigmata consist in taking part in the Passion of Christ, and that the exterior marks of this participation vary in the persons possessing them. Teresa's whole being is absorbed in this participation; and to such a degree that in the intervals between these visions she shows the intelligence of a child of five, being naïve, unable to count beyond four, not understanding, for example, what the Pope is. She explains her notions by periphrases, thus, 'Over there, a long way away,' or 'the biggest priest.' Baron Aretin says that her expressions are for the most part extraordinarily original. She speaks the pure dialect of her district. She loses consciousness completely from midnight on Thursday until two o'clock in the afternoon of Friday whilst she contemplates the tragedy of Golgotha which passes before her eyes in the fourteen tableaux of the Way of the Cross. Each lasts about eight or ten minutes, but the Crucifixion continues for an hour and a half. During this time she neither sees nor hears anything. Nor yet is she sensible of physical changes around her, as was proved by lighting an electric bulb of three thousand candle power in her presence.

In the intervals between the visions she can be questioned, and she speaks in a very simple but original way, not understanding the meaning of what is going on. She does not know, for example, that the kiss of Judas means betrayal ; or when she sees Our Lord carrying to Calvary the two pieces of wood that go to make the cross she affirms that he carries wood for building, and that he is going away to his home. She knows not at all what must follow. The way in which the ecstasies begin is by a typical ravishment, there is immediate loss of consciousness ; the persons she sees appear absolutely real and living to her, and among them she observes more particularly Our Lord and his Mother.

These visions are indeed startling ; and not only by their unique action, but also by their incomparable freedom from restraint, their historical and ethnological accuracy, their psychological and pathological veracity. At the same time all is shown in such a simple and natural way that whoever can imagine sufficiently clearly, and can make a clear mental image of what she recounts, is absolutely astounded. The splendour of Papini's *Life of Christ*—the best book of modern times about Our Lord—pales before these few sentences of a simple country servant girl who evidently does not command the language to describe what she sees. This is shown by her description, for instance, of the clothes of the persons in the visions as ' things.' What is still more striking is that her wounds bleed at the very time she sees our Saviour covered with blood. It can be found on her dried and also wet and red. Sometimes there are as many as three different strata.

These visions of hers are in no way like the usual traditional stations of the cross which are generally conceived in accordance with the costumes and manners of the artist who made them. Here the



persons seen belong, really, to the first century of our era, as we know them by the result of historical research. Where could this simple girl who was educated in the only class of the village school have learnt all these details—facts unknown to many a so-called ‘intellectual’? Anne-Catherine Emmerich’s visions (edited by C. Brentano) do not attain to the grandeur of the clear phrases of Teresa; it is reality itself which speaks.

In them indeed our most ingenious and ultra-scientific methods of explanation are surpassed. We have seen the film ‘The King of Kings,’ made at Hollywood at enormous expense. But with all its dramatic perfection and technique it does not succeed in moving the soul to such a degree as do the few sentences of Teresa; such, for instance, as have been taken down by M. Witt, or as we ourselves have heard from her own lips at Konnersreuth. In fact we can say that these visions moved us as nothing else had ever done. Anything so simple, so ravishing and yet so convincing to the senses could but come from the mouth of an eye-witness, be it the evangelists or our stigmatist.

At the time of our first visit to Konnersreuth, July 22, 1927, thanks to the friendly aid of Professor Pabstmann, a member of the scientific commission charged with the investigation of the case, we were able to take some very useful notes on these contemplations. Teresa, if one questions her, describes with great accuracy the position of the Mount of Olives as well as the plants to be found there. She sees in the garden the Son of God, made man, in his agony; the disciples tired and lying down. She sees Judas come with a kiss to betray his Saviour; she hears then the disciples’ shout, and Peter’s defence of his master. She hears from the other garden, separated by a wall, the taunts thrown by the crowd at Judas. She contemplates the

scourging of Christ, and her greatest suffering is to see him stripped of his garments. He is scourged by three drunken Roman soldiers, who at the same time insult him abominably. Professor Pabstmann has described this execution very interestingly. He tells how Our Lord is held by his hands bound high on a pillar so that the tips of his toes hardly touch the ground. Anyone who was in the last war will remember that the severest punishment consisted in being tied up in this way—so great is the tension of all the muscles that even death may result. For Jesus, this pain is doubled by each stroke of the whip, which Teresa, a perfect image of her master, awaits in fear and trembling, twists under the blows, and at each one shakes all over. This scourging lasts about a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes.

The torture over, Teresa's countenance becomes happy once more, showing thus her contentment, but at the end of scarcely five minutes it grows pinched again with fear, and her hands seem to be pulled back brusquely behind her. All her body shows drastically and yet naturally that the holy face of our Saviour is gashed with blows as well as the chest and the whole front of the body. And why this? Quite simply in order that Pilate may pronounce his *Ecce Homo*, a last appeal to human feeling. What picture of the scourging equals this, is so logical and self-ardent? But why was it not thought of sooner? Why should a simple country girl be called on to supply what was wanting in the meditations of so many savants?

At last the scourging is over. Christ is allowed to put on his raiment which had been thrown on the ground not far away. He is bending to pick it up when a brutal bystander sends it flying with a kick. This last act of cruelty wounds Our Lord more than the iron thongs of the whips. His dignity of King and Messiah gives them



the opportunity to mock and insult him grossly. They put him on a throne and make him sit, covered with a ragged red cloth, a reed in his hand as a sceptre ; they kneel to him mocking, dealing him blows and spitting on him. Teresa sees one of these brutes contrive to spit in Our Lord's mouth while he is groaning.

To complete this 'royal farce' the executioners would crown him. Immediately they plait a crown of thorns and impose it on their victim's head.

At this point the poor girl describes two things neither of which could she have known or imagined. Where could she have acquired such a detailed knowledge of botany to be able to tell us that the crown was not composed of two branches of common wild briar as it is generally represented on our crucifixes, but that it was rather in the form of a hat made of acanthus which in the East has particularly long and thick thorns placed close together ? Again by her bleeding in the head or her words she tells us that Our Lord was crowned on three distinct occasions. The first time is in the court or under the arcade of the Antonian tower, Pilate's superb residence. The second time is before being nailed to the cross. The executioners are no longer Roman soldiers, but according to Teresa, short thick-set men with large round faces, prominent cheekbones, and narrow eyes ; they are probably Mongolian slaves. They want to get possession of Our Lord's brown garment, new and seamless, without cutting it. As they cannot take it off without first removing the crown of thorns, they tear off the crown, and then the garment, drawing lots for it afterwards. What does it matter to them if their victim suffers a little more or a little less pain ? It is the seamless garment that interests them. It is at this moment that Teresa's wounds begin to bleed for the second time. The third crowning may be considered to take place when Our Lord, nailed to

the cross, is raised upon it. The head covered with thorns, and especially at the back, is pressed against the upright post of the cross and the thorns press even more cruelly into the flesh and bone. Christ bleeds again more profusely because his crown will not allow him to hold his head upright. That is why the stigmatisist bleeds more from the back of the head and in the hair than from the forehead.

A still more extraordinary occurrence is that Teresa hears not only the cries of the crowd, '*Salabu*,' 'crucify him, crucify him,' but also the trumpet calls, the traditional Roman signals. Executions were carried out immediately after sentence. The usual word of command resounds in the atrium: *Lictor, expedi crucem!* Two malefactors destined to share the fate of Our Lord, two executioners, two soldiers and a crowd of the curious form a procession and traverse the streets of Jerusalem. As the custom is, a small boy goes before bearing an inscription written in three languages setting out the crime of the condemned. Christ is guided with a strap to which cords are attached that he may be pulled in all directions. He carries three planks which are for the construction of the cross.

Exhausted by the sweat of blood, the scourging and the horrible treatment he has suffered, Christ bends under the weight of the planks. Lest he should die before being crucified the soldiers constrain Simon the Cyrenian to help him carry his burden. At first he refuses, but soon overcome by the Saviour's suffering he readily consents to relieve him. Next Teresa sees the women of Jerusalem weeping, as well as the scene where Mary, struck dumb with indescribable suffering, meets her Son on a spot between the old and the new ramparts. Current tradition has it that Christ took the veil of Veronica, wiped himself and gave it back to the holy woman. Teresa, however, with more likelihood tells



us that he took the veil and applied it merely to his face ; he gave it back to Veronica covered with sweat, blood and dust. Indeed he could not wipe his face, already cut and bleeding with the crown of thorns and the scourging, without hurting himself even more. Only a simple application would have been possible to remove the dust which with the sweat and blood formed clots on the face.

Last year Dr. Weissl, correspondent for the *Vossische Zeitung* of Berlin, examined Teresa's case from every point of view. A Saturday after an ecstasy he put her different questions on the topography of ancient Jerusalem, on matters which for some years have been highly controverted. Teresa took his note-book and with her trembling hand traced the plan of the city, showing the way of the cross with such exactitude that it seemed as if she were abreast of all modern discoveries on the subject. The doctor, a Jew, said in his report : ' At that moment I had a spasm of fear.' Comment is uncalled for.

The procession arrived at Golgotha. The cross was prepared for the execution, which, as well as being one of the most ignominious, was also one of the most painful of its forms. Christ was thrown upon a sort of tank which was half destroyed, and there sitting on a stone the Saviour of the world awaited the finishing of his instrument of execution. But the cross has not the usual form of two planks at right angles ; Teresa sees it in the form of a Y, as it is sometimes represented on vestments.

After his crown has been torn off our Saviour is nailed to the cross, which is laid on the ground. First his right hand is pierced by a nail, which goes through it into a hole which has been prepared for it in the wood so that the execution may be more rapid. His left arm is then stretched out, but the second hole is

too far away. The executioners have not measured aright. But what do they care for a poor wretch condemned to death? They bind his left wrist with a cord, by which two men pull on his hand while a third brute kneels on Jesus' chest so that his body may stay properly in the middle, and thus the centurion will not be able to blame them. Christ's shoulder comes out of joint; at last these brutes succeed in placing his left hand above the second hole. A quick blow of the hammer fixes his hand to the cross and causes him indescribable pain. At the same moment, in the story told by Teresa, his legs, which are still free, are drawn up in a reflex movement as if to defend himself. Why has not this detail been thought of before? For us it is conclusive. It is absolutely impossible that so simple a being as Teresa could have invented this. The legs are stretched out again by force and the feet are fixed to the wood of the cross with a single nail. With the most horrible pain to the Divine Victim the cross is raised up above the heads of all, but as was the custom, it is short; Teresa's account is here confirmed by Scripture. A Roman soldier, seized with compassion, at the end of a reed presents Our Lord with a sponge soaked with vinegar and some soothing draught. An atom of pity for the crucified that he may not suffer too much, but he refuses; he will sacrifice his life without in any way lessening the suffering.

Above the cross the ignominious inscription in three languages. At the right of Jesus a petty thief, who, overcome by the Saviour's sufferings, asks mercy of him. The words 'To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise' Teresa hears in Our Lord's own tongue. Around the cross she sees but his Mother and S. John. Behind this sorrowful group she discerns a great quantity of houses which are totally unlike those of her native village, and, moreover, have no roof. But



already darkness begins to cover the earth, the cross alone remains quite light, shining in the darkness. A sign of approaching death is the terrible thirst which becomes the greatest suffering of him who is already exhausted by the sweat of blood, the horrible wounds and other torments. The tongue swells and becomes dry ; it burns with a scorching heat. Teresa's body at this moment, in ecstasy, represents all this with such simplicity and yet with such realism that it produces on the bystander an unforgettable impression.

What is this death on the cross which is known so vaguely by the savants of the world? Teresa, who knows no more of surgery than the stable, the inn, and the country fields have taught her, is able none the less to enlighten us about this problem. She cannot tell us in words, but the ashen colour of her face shows well enough that she is indeed cognizant of the veriest details. No sooner is the cross set up than her complexion takes on a greyish tint, the cheeks become sunken. Now how better can such a deadly asphyxiation, that is a want of oxygen, be represented ; the victim dies from terrible convulsions of the whole body, especially of the respiratory muscles. Medically speaking the wounds in the hands and feet are comparatively unimportant. One could live with them for weeks and months. The real execution consists in the suspension of the victim with arms extended. Thus all the muscles of the body suffer such tension as is found in the terrible deaths of those afflicted with tetanus, hydrophobia, or strychnine poisoning. To lengthen the torture a small step was placed beneath the feet—*equitabat in cruce*. To hasten on death, however, the legs were broken as in the case of the two thieves.

To return to our subject. The darkness increases. Our Saviour alone stands out clearly, luminously almost.

Racked by horrible pains, tortured by a frightful thirst, he becomes weaker and weaker. His head is pressed forward by the crown of thorns. The body turns to a bluish hue, the eyes become sunken, the face shrunken. Teresa hears all Christ's words. The catastrophe hastens on. In a last effort Jesus arouses himself, lifts his head and cries aloud : *Eloi, Eloi, lamma sabacthani*, ' My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me.' His head sinks lower still, his knees are raised a little, bent and apart. Jesus is dead.

At this moment, Teresa, who for the last two hours has stayed with outstretched arms, in a position half-sitting, half-kneeling, falls as if shot ; she seems a corpse. No tragedian of the world could give even an approaching imitation of this simplicity, expressed none the less so powerfully, which moves the very core of the soul at the sight of her who suffering with the Saviour lives again each week his passion. It is truly a living image of the crucified.

We have already described how Teresa heard the voice of S. Teresa of the Child Jesus. Once she saw her hand, but it was only lately (1928) that she saw the whole body of the saint with whom she was speaking. At Christmas 1926 she saw the birth of Our Lord at Bethlehem, and again in 1927. These visions of the life of Our Lord, Our Lady and different saints occurred especially during the time when she had no ecstasies on Fridays. Although many spiritual writers and theologians do not attach much importance to this sort of vision—more especially is this the case in processes of canonization—they are none the less an extremely significant mark of holy persons and can have very great value in their progress in the spiritual life. They are to be distinguished from hallucinations by their subject matter, their clarity and the lasting effect they have on those who receive them. Moreover, the



appearance of Christ to S. Paul at Damascus was nothing else than a vision ; but it changed him so completely that he became one of the greatest apostles of Christianity.

It would be inaccurate to deny the reality of these events, even if the personality of their receiver becomes mixed up in the action they represent, thus changing it or adding a little to it, or if the description of the person who appears is changed a little. It would be useless to speak of a revelation here if Teresa saw only different events which have already been described in legends—S. Mary Magdalen's sojourn and death in France, for instance. It is Professor Ludwig who suggests the foregoing reflection. But even when we have eliminated all such matters it still remains so mysterious that to understand it one must indeed rack one's brains. The following is a statement of Teresa's parish priest, Father Naber :

' Among other apparitions Teresa saw S. Anthony of Padua with the Child Jesus in his arms. She saw in addition many other details in the life of the saint. But what can we think of the following occurrence? A Brazilian bishop came to see her. We were sitting at the table with Teresa. I put questions, and Teresa answered. Suddenly the bishop said something to his companion in a foreign tongue. Teresa listened, and as if recalling some incident considered for a moment, then exclaimed : " Oh, I have heard that language before ! But where was it ? Ah, I know, it was S. Anthony who spoke in that way when he left his native place ! " Indeed S. Anthony, as will be recalled, was a Portuguese, and we know that that is the language spoken in Brazil. I must confess I was at my wits' end to explain, metapsychically, such a miracle.'

There is a whole quantity of these visions. One of the most interesting concerns the Annunciation of the

Blessed Virgin. Teresa saw this glorious event and heard the angelic salutation. Professor Wutz was told of the vision and he repeated the Ave Maria. Teresa appeared not to be listening to the conversation, but as soon as she heard the first word of Aramaic she exclaimed joyfully: 'Döss ist, Döss ist,' and she continued it herself. How can this be explained?

Lama describes her vision of the Transfiguration on Mount Thabor. Accompanied by three disciples our Saviour climbed the mountain. He had a reddish brown tunic and a cloak on his shoulder. Arrived at the top—it is flat—he prayed, standing. Suddenly he was raised about a foot from the group. His raiment shone with a peculiar bright light, white as snow. His face was radiant, but not dazzling. Teresa saw his eyes distinctly and a thick cloud about his feet. She saw two men in conversation with him. The disciples seemed to awake and say something. Suddenly a cloud enveloped them, from out of which she heard a clear and powerful voice . . . then all disappeared. The light which surrounded our Saviour was stronger than that around the disciples, as the light of the sun is more powerful than that of the stars.

She witnessed, too, the last supper, the adoration of the Magi. Her vision of the descent of the Holy Ghost was striking. She saw the apostles and the Blessed Virgin gathered together in the room, the coming down of the fire with a great noise. She heard S. Peter's sermon in a strange tongue, but she understood every word of it, and wrote it down in German with extraordinary speed on a scrap of paper. She saw and heard, too, S. Peter defending himself in Aramaic, and her utterances astonished an expert in oriental languages who was present at the time.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Lama, *Therese Neumann: A Stigmatist of our day*, page 131. (Milwaukee, 1929.)



Then also she saw the life led by the Holy Family in the house in Nazareth, the death of S. Joseph, the death and the assumption of Our Lady, the burial and resurrection of Our Lord, the martyrdom of S. Lawrence (the patron of the church at Konnersreuth), the execution of S. Agnes in Rome, and many other saints. Can these visions, this recognition of relics, be based on reality? Is there any proof of their truth? It would seem so.

Another stigmatist had such visions in a manner equally remarkable. This was Anne-Catherine Emmerich. She says in her account of the life of Our Lady: 'Mary did not live at Ephesus itself, but on the outskirts . . . after leaving Jerusalem her dwelling was to be found at a distance of some three hours and a half before Ephesus is reached on a mountain to the left. This mountain sloped down steeply into Ephesus. Coming from the south-east the town can be seen at the foot of the mountain, but on approaching nearer the traveller will notice that there is some considerable distance separating the two; there are long avenues leading to the town . . . but on the south side of the town narrow paths form the route to the brush-wood covered mountain. Right at the top there is a small plain, rugged and strewn with wild plants. On this plain—one can walk right round it in half an hour—a little Christian settlement had established itself.'

Indeed a far-fetched idea if it came from the imagination of a nun who had never left her native country of Westphalia! Geography in her day was by no means so advanced as it is to-day, and there were many things unknown to learned men of the period, let alone to a country girl who had had no education in these matters. What folly on her part, then, to describe Mary's house. She says that it was built against a rock immediately under the topmost point of

the mountain, from where one has a magnificent view of the town beneath, the whole bay, and the adjacent islands. The construction was quadrangular in form, rounded at the back, built in stone. The windows were high up in the walls, the roof flat. The hearth in the middle divided the house into two parts. She gives still more details of the interior arrangement and even mentions a sort of a way of the Cross. Extraordinary pretensions indeed on the part of the narrator.

All this was described at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It was only in 1890 that a French translation of Catherine's life of the Blessed Virgin penetrated as far as Smyrna, the capital of Asia Minor. In the following year the Archbishop of Smyrna, Andrew Polycarp Timoni, named a committee to look for traces of the church built on the site of Our Lady's house. It was agreed that the visionary's description answered exactly to a mountain called, locally, Bulbul Dag (the hill of nightingales) where all the Christians of the neighbourhood had venerated from time immemorial a place known as Panagia Kapuli (house of the Blessed Virgin). What was the surprise of the examining committee to find on this spot the remains of a house whose every disposition answered to the nun's description. The arrangement of the walls could still be made out (twenty-seven and a half feet long and about thirteen feet ten inches wide). In 1898, at the depth of a foot and a half, the hearth was discovered, together with some cinders and stones blackened by smoke. The mortar and indeed the whole manner of construction go back to the first century after Christ ; comparison with other monuments of the period prove this. According to Father Fonck who examined all the evidence on the spot<sup>1</sup> ' the description of the whole region and of the holy house is given with mathematical

<sup>1</sup> See *Stimmen aus Maria-Laach*, volume 51.



precision.' There have even been found at this spot (in a region entirely Greek) flat stones bearing Hebrew inscriptions which recall the way of the Cross spoken of above.

What can the present sceptical generation say to all this ? Such facts are indeed a blow to their scepticism ; but those of goodwill alone are converted by them, the more hardened become but desperate in their doubt.

In spite of such convincing confirmation the Holy Office has barred all mention of Anne-Catherine Emmerich's visions in her process of canonization. This for the simple reason that the stigmatist's exact words cannot be distinguished from those of the author in the account given by Clement Brentano. Such is the severity of the Church in these matters.

The powerful impression produced on the soul at the sight of Teresa radiant in ecstasy when she beholds all these wonders is well described by Mgr. Kiefer : ' On September 30, 1927, I was present when Teresa Neumann in ecstasy saw for the first time S. Teresa of the Child Jesus. I remarked, too, all the others present with me on that occasion. Since then I have had but a pitying smile for all those who look on these occurrences as hysterical manifestations ; such a sight is ineffaceably imprinted on the memory of its each and every witness.' We can reiterate these words with all our hearts.

It is not without interest to know that Teresa sees all the episodes of our Saviour's life following the order of the liturgical year ; in this way she is like Anne-Catherine Emmerich. But she had never read the account of the latter's visions. The accounts she has given are full of curious facts. She describes in detail Our Lord's outward appearance : he was of rather strong constitution, without being corpulent, and of average height. None of the images or statues are the

least bit like him and Teresa experiences no pleasure in seeing them. The description of the Magi is extraordinarily realistic: she tells us their origin, the number of their companions, describes with precision the star which appeared in Nubia and was there first observed by Balthasar's wise men. The number of the Holy Innocents massacred at Bethlehem was, according to Teresa, upwards of seventy. All the soldiers who took part in arresting Our Lord in the Garden of Olives were converted. Pontius Pilate is not in hell because he tried with all the means at his disposal to set Christ free, but on account of the pharisees he was unsuccessful. She gives a description of the cross. It was composed of ill-assorted pieces of wood. After his resurrection Our Lord appeared first of all to his Mother. After his Ascension Mary stayed some years at Jerusalem, whence she moved to Ephesus, but she died at Jerusalem. She was buried on the Mount of Olives. A few days afterwards she was assumed into heaven.

Another of the extraordinary gifts of Teresa is her power to discern relics, especially those of the true Cross. Contact with these causes her a sharp pain, whereas she recognizes other relics without suffering in this way. Being shown a relic of the true Cross which had belonged to Barbara Pfister, in childhood a friend of Anne-Catherine Emmerich, she declared that the latter had gone straight to heaven. And a hard saying for these democratic times, she makes the same assertion with regard to the Emperor Charles of Austria, the unfortunate exile of Funchal who died in 1920. To these wonders must be added yet another, the fact that during her visions Teresa utters sentences in Aramaic—Our Lord's own language.

Indeed this hysteria of Teresa's is a strange disease! All at once it makes her speak a language no one



understands. Nor is this enough for it: it makes use of a tongue dead these eighteen hundred years. Teresa knows the phonetics of it, its grammar and its accent. It is a Semitic language which is written with the consonants only; the vowels are suppressed. All this apparently to make it a little more difficult for the orientalist, for the sense of a word varies according to the vowel which is added to a consonant. So we are confronted with a veritable medical curiosity unparalleled in the annals of science. Even the sceptics prefer to keep silence on this point. They leave it aside altogether, or else use but extremely futile arguments. The history of stigmatisation shows no other case of this. In this respect Teresa Neumann is unique.

The events in question took place in the following way. From the very beginning of her Friday visions Teresa related that she heard something that she could not understand. Nor could she repeat it. It was only after hearing it several times that she could remember a little, and that completely baffled the parish priest, Father Naber. The latter called in his friend, Dr. Wutz, a well-known professor of oriental languages, who, greatly astonished, discovered that it was Aramaic that Teresa was repeating, the language, namely, spoken by our Saviour. He could distinguish different dialects in this long-forgotten tongue; especially that of Caiphas and others who took part in the Passion. S. Peter, for example, who was betrayed by his Galilean accent. Professor Pabstmann kindly repeated some words of this language for the present writer, who after great efforts found it impossible to retain a single word, although as a doctor he has been in four very different parts of the world, and speaks eight languages.

There are enormous difficulties of pronunciation. Dr. Bauer, Professor of Semitic Philology at Halle,

remarks on this in the *Zeitschrift für Parapsychologie*, and he is, with Professors Dolman and Wutz, one of the authorities on the language. Professor Wutz examined Teresa for a long time before he formed a definite opinion. What is really striking is that she pronounces even the most difficult words correctly, and that in spite of her heavy Upper Westphalian accent. He tried to trap her; he would endeavour to deceive her with Hebrew words (in the angelic salutation for instance), or by making grammatical mistakes. But it was all to no purpose. Impossible that we should suspect suggestion or telepathy here; Teresa told him grammatical forms whose very existence he denied until they were found in ancient manuscripts. Hence he could but bear witness to the truth. He said plainly to Professor Benès that if there had been any deception he would have been able to discover it with the greatest ease.

Professor Bauer, whom we have already mentioned, says categorically: '*The fact that it is real Aramaic is absolutely incontestable.*' It is Aramaic of the time of Jesus Christ.' Following this he produces (simultaneously with Dr. Gerlich) several arguments in support of his thesis. Thus Judas, coming upon Jesus in the garden, cries out: 'Chélakh rabboni.' Those in the crowd exclaim: 'Maggera baïsseboua, gannaba.' From the rabble comes: 'Salabou!' (crucify him). Nailed to the Cross the man of sorrows cries: 'Eché' (I thirst). To his executioners he says: 'Abba, chaboc, léhon' (Father, forgive them). In despair of being forsaken he exclaims: 'Eloï, Eloï, lama sabacthani.' Then the words 'Father, into thy hands I command my spirit,' resound in Aramaic, 'Abba, béyadakh afkéd roukhi.' The last 'word' from the Cross: 'It is consummated' is 'Chalem coulékhi' in Aramaic.

It is clear that no one could divine a foreign language,



one moreover unknown and dead for so long. All the more Teresa, educated in the only class of an elementary school, who has passed her life in the stable or in the fields. Father Leiber, S.J., says the same thing:<sup>1</sup> 'Teresa Neumann heard words and sentences in Aramaic before Professor Wutz's visit, and some of what she heard was entirely new to him.' Dr. Kiefer speaks with a like conviction: 'As to the Aramaic it is incontestable.'<sup>2</sup> Ecclesiastical authority, too, in the person of Cardinal Faulhaber (in his well-known sermon) says: 'If professors of oriental languages, not only who know literary Aramaic but are also acquainted with its different dialects, admit that this child of the Fichtelbirge, educated in an elementary school, can reproduce words and sentences of this language, then indeed is it that the words of the Gospel have been accomplished; it is a supernatural revelation from God, for do we not read "they shall speak strange tongues"?''

Professor Wutz is preparing a book on the subject.

We have already said, and we repeat: 'Taken together with the fact of her absolute fast<sup>3</sup> Teresa's ecstatic knowledge of our Saviour's language constitutes one of the two inexplicable points in the case of Konnersreuth. Before them all explanations, all accusations against Teresa Neumann are bound to fail and her enemies must, consequently, keep silence. Nevertheless these two enigmas continue to trouble the peace of sceptics; it is useless for them to hide such events or to proclaim them as inexistent.'

<sup>1</sup> Leiber, S.J., *Konnersreuth*, page 33. (Freiburg, 1927.)

<sup>2</sup> *Konnersreuth*, page 65. (Brömer, Eichstädt, 1928.)

<sup>3</sup> See following chapter.

## CHAPTER IV

### TERESA'S PERPETUAL FAST

HOWEVER inexplicable and unimaginable may be this reproduction of a language which has been dead for nearly two thousand years and of which a poor country girl could not have the slightest notion, it is a fact which astonishes only savants and those who for want of a better name we may term intellectuals. But there is another phenomenon which causes a more general and a very lasting surprise.

At Christmas 1923 Teresa Neumann accepted a disease of the throat in place of a priest who was suffering in this way ; she was unable to swallow solid food and lived solely on liquids. Then, from Christmas 1926 onwards she gave up even this way of nourishing her body. She receives Holy Communion every day ; and afterwards she used to drink a small spoonful of water. Since September 1927, according to the information furnished by her parish priest, Father Naber, she has even given up this drop of water after communion. *She neither eats nor drinks . . . but none the less she lives.*

This, we may affirm, is the most astonishing happening at Konnersreuth ; a veritable enigma, incredible to all those who pride themselves on possessing common sense. Is it true ? Is it, indeed, possible ? Everyone knows by experience that we must eat and drink to continue living, to have the strength to live. Suddenly this ' hysterical girl ' throws all overboard. ' It is



defying nature,' cry some, and the continual controversy over Konnersreuth becomes yet sharper. Who is right? Whoever can prove the facts of the case by a serious inquiry and the evidence of witnesses.

Now public opinion was so stirred by these discussions that the Bishop of Ratisbon recognized the necessity of setting up an inquiry to verify the facts: to see if there was any mistake or trickery. The Neumann family had an unblemished reputation in the neighbourhood; and hundreds of visitors testified to this effect. But that was not enough. For this reason the late Bishop of Ratisbon entered into negotiations with Teresa's father to have her transferred to some hospital where she might be examined. He had almost agreed when a young doctor spoilt everything by his false alarms. Thus Teresa could only be examined in her father's house. This was done. A commission made up of four Franciscan nursing sisters, on oath, was charged, under the supervision of Dr. Seidl, to watch over Teresa night and day; to note all that should happen in the fortnight (from July 14 to July 29, 1927) which was in any way out of the ordinary. So the existence of this phenomenon is confirmed for us for a fortnight 'with the exactitude of any criminal trial,' to use Professor Ewald's expression. There is absolute certainty, as we read in the report of the Bishop of Ratisbon (October 4, 1927). Sworn witnesses, who had not left the stigmatist for an instant, have confirmed this by their depositions. We read in this report: 'During the whole period of the inquiry the reception of any form of nourishment was the object of strict observation. The instructions given to the sisters who were watching Teresa were interpreted in the severest manner possible. In spite of this meticulous invigilation she was never found taking food or drink, nor even trying to do so.' Dr.

Ewald quotes these words. The water used for washing, and that for rinsing the mouth was carefully weighed and measured ; there was thus no possibility of trickery in that direction. And with what result ?

Professor Ewald himself tells us (on page 42 of his book, already cited). During the whole of this period she took but thirty-nine grams of Host and forty-five cubic centimetres of water, or three soup-spoonsful, no more, no less. This quantity is so insignificant that it cannot be considered.

As a medical student we learnt that man, according to Rubner and Voigt, needs about three thousand calories to sustain life and be able to work. This theory was completed, later on, by that of the necessity of vitamines, without which no matter what food not containing them will be useless in the nourishment of the body. Here all is wanting : nourishment and vitamines. How can this be accounted for ; its explanation was demanded in desperation by Dr. Weissl in the *Vossische Zeitung*.

Let us analyse the case. *Teresa neither eats nor drinks, yet is living at the end of a fortnight*. Dr. Ewald started to work out the problem, but drew back as if afraid. He says no more about it. It is astonishing that he should have omitted such a thing in his report as an expert ; the value of the document in question is decidedly lessened on this account.

Firstly, then, we must make a big distinction between a fast from all solid food but in which liquid is allowed, and an absolute fast from the two. The partial fast (in which liquid is allowed, that is) is used in medicine with success in certain diseases. Fader in his *Physical Culture* recommends it even for a period of more than forty days. The present writer has had personal experience of some cases treated on these lines and can witness to the fact of a subject going for eighty-



two days without eating anything, but receiving a sufficient quantity of liquid. Not to eat but to drink, and neither to eat nor to drink are two different, vastly different things. Professor Ewald begins to speak of this (page 46): 'According to Volkmann's tables we secrete in the air expelled from the lungs about four hundred grams of water, and as we learn from physiology a like quantity, or even more, leaves the body through the pores without our being able to control it. Then we lose about a litre or kilogram of water through urination and intestinal excretions. Thus, in all, about two litres of water are lost during the first day of an absolute fast. Even if we admit that the two last sources of this loss become less as time goes on there remain, nevertheless, the two first which dry up the body and the blood. As to the latter an adult male has some five or six kilograms; he can lose, at the most, half of it without dying.' Now for how long can these continual losses be borne?

When the body is deprived of all liquid from outside it begins to draw on its resources from within: the blood, lymph, and the moisture to be found in the composition of the tissues. The whole organism rapidly dries up, the blood becomes thicker. The circulation being thus clogged, the heart weakens, convulsions and cyanosis make their appearance; the subject is dying. Death would occur at the end of a week. In a text-book of physiology we found an account of a Corsican lawyer who died at the end of a twelve-days' absolute fast because, unable to hold out, he had on the eighth or ninth day drunk a whole pitcher of water. To pass an entire fortnight without eating or drinking is absolutely impossible. Dr. Ewald forgot to mention this, although he began by upholding that as Teresa Neumann weighed fifty-five kilograms, at the end of six months she would disappear com-

pletely ! In any case, then, his report of the phenomena of Konnersreuth is by no means complete. We have stated briefly the first problem confronting us. The second is more striking.

During the inquiry Teresa was weighed, and always with the same clothes. At the beginning she turned the scale at fifty-five kilograms, and at the end of the inquiry she had the same weight. So *in spite of the fact that she neither ate nor drank* she was no thinner, that is her weight had not diminished. On the other hand the present writer is acquainted with a patient who for reasons of health remained without food for a fortnight—liquids were taken, of course—and who lost eight kilograms, four hundred grams. How can we reconcile these two cases ? This is our second problem.

Instead of becoming clearer, however, the problem is made more enigmatic by this weighing. After her ecstasy on the Friday (July 15), she was weighed the next day, she turned the scale at fifty-one kilograms, that is four kilograms less. On Wednesday, July 20, she was already fifty-four kilograms, in other words she had gained three kilograms. On Saturday, July 23 (the day after our visit) she was fifty-two kilograms, five hundred grams, or one and a half kilogram less. On Thursday, July 28, she was once more fifty-five kilograms. These figures are copied from Dr. Ewald's pamphlet.

While she neither eats nor drinks, not only does she continue to live but, heavens alive ! she increases in weight. What paradox is this ? All, doctor and layman alike, are confronted with something entirely outside their experience ; they do not know what to make of it. Imagine that one had to increase one's weight by half a kilogram a day. It is doubtful that we should succeed. Only a man recovering from typhoid fever would be capable of such a feat, and for



this purpose he would need a great quantity of food and drink, especially drink. But Teresa takes absolutely nothing. Let it be granted that to increase in weight by half a kilogram daily it would be necessary to take four or five kilograms of nourishment. The net increase in weight would be half a kilogram, but the rest would have to leave the body. If, then, we count at one kilogram the water given off by respiration and transpiration we must not forget the one and a half of urine and the half of intestinal excrement. Now would it be possible to hide or dispose secretly of such quantities of excrement for a whole fortnight? Supposing that Teresa had succeeded in obtaining a little nourishment, all that was not absorbed would have to be ejected from the body in one way or another; and still this would be an improbable supposition, since psychologically as well as physiologically it is much more difficult to eat only a little than to eat nothing at all. The consequent craving would become irresistible.

Thus we come to the third and most important argument. During the whole course of the inquiry Teresa had no evacuation of the bowels. Only at the end of five or six weeks a very small quantity of biliary matter and epithelium. Nothing is excreted from the stomach, but only from the liver. Dr. Reismann examined these so-called excrements under a microscope and could find in them no traces of food. On the other hand, there is no form of nourishment known which is completely assimilable.

During the whole fortnight the inquiry lasted Teresa passed but five hundred and twenty-five grams of urine (July 15, three hundred and forty-five, July 22, one hundred and eighty;) that is just over half a litre. This urine showed a strong reaction to acetone, characteristic of that from a body tried by hunger.

Dr. Ewald acknowledges these facts, but finding them so startling endeavours to find a way out in speaking of an analysis of the urine subsequent to the inquiry. This is solely to save his professional reputation, and to give not the slightest sign of capitulation before this unfathomable mystery. He shuns the real issue in words such as : ' I cannot avoid the impression that all is not yet decided (in this case).' He has nothing positive to go on and he can suggest no further measures to be taken. True, he calls for an examination in some neutral clinic ' if indeed science ought still to concern itself with Konnersreuth ! ' Unfortunately for the professor such statements, we had almost said cries of despair, change in no way the facts observed by the commission. He passes over in silence the obvious conclusion to be drawn from them.

Geiger shows us where the professor's fear lies :<sup>1</sup> ' Science has declared that this well-established fact (Teresa's fast) is inexplicable. Dr. Ewald's pamphlet is an extremely valuable confession on the part of modern science ; it amounts to an affirmation of the supernatural character of these phenomena.'

Not only has Professor Ewald been unable to explain the enigma of Konnersreuth, but he has not tried to do so ; he has simply eluded the obvious conclusion. Need we wonder : they are always the same, these scientists.

There is still another extraordinary event, confirmed likewise by the commission, which merits description here : Teresa Neumann sleeps one hour, two at the most, by day. Yet for the rest of the time she is quite wide-awake, Fridays excepted when she suffers and does not rest at all.

Other doctors who have spoken of Konnersreuth have at least tried to give some sort of explanation. Thus

<sup>1</sup> Th. Geiger, *Die Stigmatisierte von Konnersreuth*, page 28.



Dr. Kröner supposes a kind of invisible vampirism by which the stigmatist receives strength and nutrition from those around her. But to go to such lengths, to imagine for example that she can immaterialize water for use in her own body, is to take us into the domain of fairy tales. There is no scientific basis whatever for such a fantastic invention. Dr. Stephen's idea, which tells us that Teresa maintains her strength from her own resources, is no less foolish. Is she a human example of perpetual motion? Finally, Dr. Weissl's romantic theory that she eats and drinks naturally, even without knowing it, while in a state of somnambulism, is so far-fetched as to be its own answer.

All this is novel, but with such futile explanations there would be no longer any science worthy of the name. Is it not far better to be humble and to quote with Dr. Benès, Teresa's own words: 'What do all these people want with me? It is quite unnecessary to name here, a difference between the natural and the supernatural. Has not God the same power over both?'

Even that unhappily famous monist, Dr. Aigner of Munich, hardened opponent as he is of the Lourdes miracles, cannot hide his astonishment before the wonders of Konnersreuth, and so far, in spite of his visits there, he has not dared to deny their authenticity. If such a man is embarrassed, what does the ordinary man in the street think of Teresa Neumann? It is a case which causes reflection, but at the same time brings out the fact that the moderns find it difficult to think, and would have the State think in their place; why, otherwise, does the State exist? One can imagine them saying: 'When an official decision is given (published with the State seal) we shall be able to believe it perhaps. Or again, since so many interesting phenomena are observed in Teresa let her be sent to a

hospital. Let the doctors examine her and tell us something about them.'

It has also been proposed that Teresa should be sent to a convent, but, it must be confessed, this is hardly agreeable to modern ears. What! to a convent? Why and with what right should she be taken to a convent from the bosom of her family, away from those who have cared for her for seven years? In addition, be it observed, the person most intimately concerned has no wish to go to one. And as is well known, one cannot undertake the religious life without a vocation.

There remains then but the hospital. In the spring of 1927 the Bishop of Ratisbon made a tentative move of this nature. Teresa's father, in spite of his war experience with doctors (which were probably far from agreeable) and in the face of the indiscretions committed by some medical men who had come to see his daughter, had almost given his consent when a young doctor told him what such an experiment would mean: plaster dressings on the stigmata, forced feeding, injections, etc. Since then no one has been able to overcome the repugnance he feels for any institution of this nature. Moreover one cannot force people into hospitals, all the more as Teresa stands in no need of medical treatment since, apart from her Friday ecstasies, she is quite normal in every way, and can carry out various tasks in the house and receive visitors. Of course the stigmata could be treated like ordinary wounds, but we know already what would be the result from the case of Father Pius, the Capuchin; even the most up-to-date of doctors were unsuccessful.

But the stigmatist herself? If she does not wish to go to a hospital why is she opposed to a medical inquiry? That indeed would seem suspect. In the first place it is generally recognized that the Neumann family have placed no obstacles whatever in the way of



any doctor officially sent to them, and no commission of experts has ever been refused. Geiger's statements prove this. Dr. Stephen, head of a clinic at Frankfort, wrote: 'Full satisfaction is available to the most critical of minds. I was able to examine all the organic symptoms close at hand, and to observe all the details . . .' The episcopal committee of inquiry was able to base its report on facts observed and examined several times by qualified nurses under the directions of a doctor. There is no need, then, to take Teresa to a hospital; all the more as a specialist in metapsychology has given his opinion that such a place would not be at all a suitable spot for an examination of these psychic phenomena as they are liable to be modified or even to disappear completely on account of a simple change of place. Dr. Kröner asks, in the most discreet manner possible, that a new inquiry be held in Teresa's own house.

'Put Teresa in hospital? Is she not suffering enough already?' This is the characteristic utterance of a Jewish publicist, Max Brod. What would be the good of putting her in a clinic, even a so-called neutral clinic? The principal reason would be the opportunity such an examination would afford to science to observe whether or not Konnersreuth has upset the laws of nature. To such a proposition we reply that the case of Teresa Neumann is eminently religious in nature, and absolutely incompatible with Dr. Ewald's statement: 'She should be examined elsewhere, if it be still useful for science to concern itself with her.' Principally it is a religious phenomenon: the increase of scientific knowledge is here a matter of little importance. Secondly, what guarantee have we that Teresa would not be made a subject for experiment? Only lately was it reported (at Vienna, for example, where it happened in a case of scarlatina) that dangerous experiments had

been made on patients, even against their will. Thirdly, in what clinic can we find the required conditions: specialists who have not only sufficient meta-psychical knowledge but are also endowed with the necessary religious equipment to examine this enigma without impeding or forming a previous judgement of the results of the inquiry. We are entirely in agreement with Dr. Kröner when he says: 'To have Teresa examined in a clinic for mental cases would mean exposing a psychic phenomenon of extreme rarity and value to the incomprehension of materialistic science, and to men who are entirely unqualified in this province. In a clinic of this nature the girl would assuredly be ruined, psychically and morally. . . .'

Indeed to have her treated in one of these places seems to us to be without sense or advantage. It is very doubtful whether a subject so sensitive as our stigmatist would be able to bear for long the treatment meted out to those who refuse food. If they defend themselves they are put into a strait waistcoat in order that they may be fed artificially through a tube into the stomach. There would be but one way of protest open to her: death itself. Meanwhile we can agree with her father who with the good common sense of a peasant will not allow her to leave his roof without guarantees. Are we then to be considered as opposed to another examination of the case of Konnersreuth? By no means. Teresa Neumann may be examined afresh if it seem good to the ecclesiastical authorities; and provided always that it take place at Konnersreuth and be done with discretion, let it be as severe and prolonged as is necessary. But the specialists convoked for such an inquiry should have more than the requisite scientific knowledge: they should have a human heart. Then, too, we are faced with the question: will the world ever be convinced of the insufficiency of a



scientific explanation? Did not Christ work miracles without any the more obtaining faith on the part of the majority of the Jews? We know what Zola said about Lourdes. Indeed it seems doubtful, to say the least, that inquiries conducted in the most scientific spirit will have the slightest effect on the wilful enemies of religion: they will look for an excuse or a way out. There will always remain for their use the most absurd and superficial of subterfuges: one day science will explain it all the same. As if science had explained even the most elementary ideas with which she deals: matter, energy, electricity, life!

## CHAPTER V

### THE COMMUNIONS IN ECSTASY

ALL these phenomena, however incredible they may seem, are surpassed by what is called the ecstatic communion. The present writer has not had the privilege of assisting at one of these communions, and for this reason is obliged to quote the observations of others who have witnessed this marvel. The following is an extract from *Les faits de Konnersreuth*, an article by Father M.-S. Morard, O.P., Professor of Philosophy, which appeared in the pages of *Nova et Vetera* (No. 4, 1929). 'After relating the chief points of a conversation with Teresa Neumann, Dr. Gerlich continues :

' " I would lay particular emphasis on the fact that during this conversation Teresa Neumann was in ecstasy. The next day she knew nothing of our encounter nor of what we talked about, as I was able to verify subsequently. . . . She had told me in the course of the ecstasy that Saturday morning (which was the next day, October 15, 1927, the feast of S. Teresa) we should go together to the church and that I should be present at her communion and see a new phenomenon which would take place on this occasion. It is hardly necessary for me to say that before when I had accompanied her to the church—I had on several occasions—I had always left her at her place behind the altar and discreetly withdrawn. I was, then, sitting with her on the Saturday morning in the presbytery



kitchen. She talked with me while I breakfasted. Suddenly looking at the clock, she exclaimed : ' I must go to the church now.' I asked her : ' You are going to communion ? ' She replied that she was and was about to leave when I said to her, ' Wait, Teresa, I will come with you.' She was astonished, as I had not given her any idea of my intention. I added that the day before, during her ecstasy, she had declared that I should be present at her communion. Saying nothing she allowed me to help her to her place behind the altar and I took that by her side. When she heard the priest enter the sacristy she said to me : ' Please ask Father Naber to come here, I have something to tell him, alone.' I went to the sacristy, gave the message and shut the door when the parish priest went out. He came back after a moment and told me I could go back to my place beside Teresa. He informed me that she had asked him if it were true that she had told me in ecstasy that I should be present at her communion. When Father Naber told her it was so, he had been present at the time, she did not insist. And thus I was able to observe the new phenomenon which occurs when at Holy Communion she is granted a vision of the Saviour.

' " It took place in the following manner. The moment Father Naber arrived at the corner of the altar with the ciborium Teresa went into ecstasy and showed the strongest desire to go forward and meet her Lord. But the shape of the chair prevented her. Her countenance lit up, her eyes shone, her hands were held slightly forward, her feet moved and she raised her body as if she wanted to get up. The parish priest told me to kneel straight in front of her so as to be able to observe her mouth exactly. This I did. When the Host came near her lips she opened her mouth wide and put out her tongue. Her hands were on her breast.

The priest laid the Host on the end of her tongue and drew back. Teresa drew in her tongue slightly, just enough for the extremity to touch the lip and teeth of the lower jaw. The Host remained on the tongue, quite visible. I could clearly see the back of the tongue and the palate. Suddenly the Host vanished. Directly, Teresa extended her tongue for a few moments, with her mouth wide open. She had not shut it from the moment she had opened it on the approach of the priest, nor had she made any movement of swallowing. The Host could not be seen on the palate nor anywhere in the mouth. Moreover, all the interior of the mouth had remained clearly in sight the whole time. After some instants of intense recollection she spoke for some time in ecstasy. Nor during this time did I notice any movement of swallowing. No water had been given her.

“ “ I would add that Father Naber, after hearing Teresa’s declaration that I should be present at her communion to be a witness of the new phenomenon, had given me full particulars on the Friday evening. Thus I knew perfectly well during the ceremony on what to concentrate my attention. That part of the church is well lighted.

“ “ As I have already said, this new phenomenon only takes place on the days when Teresa at the first sight of the ciborium goes into ecstasy and enjoys the vision of her Saviour. On the other days the communion takes place as usual : a particle of the Host is dipped in water and put on her tongue. . . .”

“ “ Those who, like me,” says another witness<sup>1</sup>, “ have been able to be present at this ceremony, know what sufferings and what difficulties accompany the efforts, sometimes lasting for a whole minute, which she makes to swallow this very small morsel.” The following is

<sup>1</sup> Erwin von Aretin, in *Einkehr*, August 3, 1927.



another account which comes from Teresa's immediate circle, probably from Father Naber himself.<sup>1</sup>

“The ecstatic communion is not a phenomenon which occurs each day. Very often Teresa Neumann receives Holy Communion ordinarily. The priest puts on her tongue a very small fragment of the Host ; and it is only with the greatest difficulty that she can swallow it. On the other hand, she is given no water as was done beforehand (before mid-September 1927). The total abstinence from all food and drink continues, then, in all its severity. But very often, too, when the priest draws near with the Host Teresa goes into ecstasy ; her whole face lights up, she wants to go forward to meet her Saviour, she holds out her hands to welcome him, for it is the risen Lord she sees before her and not the Host nor yet the priest : Jesus Christ himself comes to her. In this case she receives a complete Host, which is no sooner put on her tongue than it disappears. The Host remains intact after its mysterious absorption and Teresa feels within herself the sacramental presence of Christ. It is only the day after, so it is said, a little before the next communion that the Host dissolves and the sacramental presence of Christ comes to an end. Then she complains bitterly at being left alone by the Saviour. If sometimes it comes to an end a little sooner than usual she is seized by an intense longing, and has no other desire than that of the next communion.”

‘To these two witnesses independent of each other and whose testimony is confirmed by all those who have had occasion to give evidence on this matter we add that of a religious who holds an important post in a great international Catholic organization, and whom we had the honour to hear speak of Teresa at length. According to the information he was good enough to

<sup>1</sup> *Konnnersreuther Sontagsblatt*, September 9, 1928.

give us and allow us to use publicly he visited Teresa on two occasions : the first time from December 6 to 8, 1928, and the second time on January 12 and 13, 1929. We give here but the essential facts in order not to make this book unduly long.

‘ On December 7, which was a Friday, he was present from half-past nine onwards at the famous vision of the Passion. Teresa Neumann had sent a message to him the day before saying that he could converse with her alone on that Friday at eleven in the morning. It is the moment when in her vision of the Saviour he has just arrived at Calvary and has to wait that the preparations for the execution may be completed. He is led aside, well-guarded, into a kind of ditch until his enemies take him once more to nail him to the cross. There is thus a long pause in the sequence of these sorrowful visions. On the day in question the pause was occupied by what the parish priest calls “ Ecstasy of repose ” (*gehobener Zustand der Ruhe*), the occurrence of which he announced by the characteristic sentence “ *Jetzt ist der Heiland da,* ” “ the Saviour is there.” It has also been called the ecstasy of lucidity. In this state Teresa, speaking in pure dialect German, reveals what the Saviour tells her ; she remembers nothing whatever of these things once the ecstasy is over. In the course of this ecstatic conversation at which only Father Naber and the religious were present, among other things Teresa told the latter : “ It is you who will give me Holy Communion to-morrow.” Already the night before in ecstasy she had given this message for him through Father Naber, and had declared that that day (December 8) she would see the Saviour and afterwards his mother. Towards the end of the afternoon when he had gone to his room at the hotel for a few moments he was suddenly visited by Professor Mayr of Eichstätt, who, very moved, told him, “ I have a message for you



from the Saviour himself: Teresa Neumann has just told me in ecstasy 'Go to Father X and tell him that it is he who will sing the Mass and preach to-morrow morning.' "

'The next day at half-past five in the morning the religious took the Blessed Sacrament to Teresa. She was in her bed, quiet and peaceful. Her lips were murmuring a sort of prayer—a usual invocation with her—*Heiland . . . Heiland . . . lieb Heiland* (Saviour, Saviour, beloved Saviour). At the moment when the priest lifted up the sacred Host saying *Ecce Agnus Dei* at once she sat up in bed, transfigured, her arms extended, her face radiant, an expression of indescribable happiness pictured on her countenance, as if she would get up and go forward to meet her Lord. Following the parish priest's instructions and to let Teresa enjoy the vision a little longer, Father X waited half a minute or so with the Host in his hand, an entire Host be it noted, and then placed it on the communicant's tongue. The mouth was still open with the tongue outstretched on the lower lip when the Host disappeared. Our witness was able to observe the fact under his very eyes: there was not the slightest shadow of doubt.

'The thanksgiving lasted about ten minutes. Then suddenly the visionary sat up anew, just as she had done to receive Holy Communion. *Jetzt ist die Mutter da* (the Blessed Virgin is there) Father Naber remarked in a low voice. Teresa's ravished looks were fixed for a long time on the invisible apparition, whilst her hands were outstretched towards her. . . . *Mit . . . mit*, cries the stigmatist (With you, with you, take me with you). Then she falls back again on her cushions.

'When the vision is over Teresa enters into that state of absorption and interior recollection that Father Naber calls *Zustand der Benommenheit*; in this state her faculties of conception and expression resemble

those of a child of five (it is probably a case of temporary obliteration of acquired knowledge) but her memories of the vision are very clear. Questioned by Father Naber she was able to describe, painfully indeed, clumsily, but none the less distinctly, what she had just seen. It was the woman of the Apocalypse. *Et signum magnum apparuit in cælo : mulier amicta sole, et luna sub pedibus ejus, et in capite ejus corona stellarum duodecim.* The Blessed Virgin had spoken to her and Teresa Neumann consented, on the promise of secrecy, to reveal what had been told her. "Something very comforting," added our witness. All all events he had now the text and subject of his sermon.

'At the midday meal Teresa was at table with the parish priest's guests. She was as usual, lively, witty, jovial, with no condescending airs or signs of pride. She told once again her vision of the Saviour. But when the *Angelus* rang, and the whole company got up to say the prayer, Teresa suddenly went out. The reason for this hurried departure soon became clear. The *Angelus* had reminded her of the vision of the morning, the vision of Mary, and she had to go out to avoid bursting into tears before all these people.

'On the occasion of his second visit this same religious once more had the privilege of giving Holy Communion to Teresa Neumann, not this time in her room but at the church. It was Sunday, January 13, 1929. All happened as before. The Host disappeared from Teresa's tongue before she had shut her mouth. But this time it was under the form of a very small child that she saw the Saviour. And our witness confirms that in this ecstatic communion Teresa sees neither Host nor priest ; suddenly she no longer sees anything but the Saviour who is coming towards her, nearer, nearer . . . and disappears as she feels him within her.



'The religious whose testimony we give here is absolutely worthy of belief. He is Father Graf von Galen, secretary of the *Unio Catholica* for the conversion of schismatics. Father von Galen went again to Konnersreuth from February 21 to 23, 1929, and on the Saturday (February 23) he once more gave communion to Teresa under the same conditions as the preceding occasion.'

## CHAPTER VI

### FOUR VISITS TO KONNERSREUTH

**I**N accordance with the principles which should be applied to everything seemingly astonishing and unbelievable we went to Konnersreuth several times in order to be able to form a personal opinion, and so as to base this book on our own experience.

The first visit took place under rather extraordinary circumstances. In the summer of 1927 we were undergoing a course of treatment at Franzensbad which is quite near Konnersreuth ; but we were by no means tempted to go and inspect this place of miracles even though it was but fifteen miles from where we were. By a series of coincidences, however, we arrived there on July 22 of that same year, and it was really in spite of ourselves that we wrote this book ; in fact we had in prospect a whole quantity of other work.

Friday, July 22, 1927, then, the little group with, which we were travelling arrived in Konnersreuth. Already in the village street were a great number of cars and carriages and a whole crowd of visitors who, noiselessly, were lining up in front of a little house on the left. Those whom we passed in the street astonished us by their politeness and the natives of the place gave evidence of extraordinary affability, all the more surprising in this our twentieth century.

The house belonging to the Neumann family is a stone building some twelve yards long. Half of the building is used as a barn, and over the ground floor is



a large hay-loft. Although the house is by no means a high one it has an attic overlooking the street, and it is there that have taken place, and continue to take place, the events which astonish the world. In front of it there are some pear trees. On the ground floor to the left is a large room with four windows taking up the whole corner of the house, with a little kitchen attached whose window is but a few inches above the level of the road. Such was and such is to-day the appearance of the house, even after the changes made in 1927 when on account of the great numbers of visitors the ceilings began to give way. Teresa's father decided to repair his house and to extend the barn for the needs of his large family. He did this almost entirely himself during his spare time and with the help of his children. We saw it ourselves when at the time of our second visit Teresa was living at the presbytery. In place of the barn there are two little rooms gained by a convenient wooden staircase.

The long line of waiting people went forward fairly quickly, in perfect silence and without any disorder. Our turn came before eleven o'clock. We went, by a little primitive door, into a kind of ante-chamber paved with bricks where were Teresa's father and, by chance, her mother. Her father is a strong man of fifty with a pleasant face and large grey moustache. Her mother is a typical strong peasant woman ; there is a sad look on her face caused by the crowds who come to upset her small household. Nevertheless Teresa's parents forbid no one to see her, but they invariably refuse any present, especially of money, even though all these strangers cause considerable inconvenience in their daily life and hinder them in the earning of their living. These good people have but one idea : to serve a superior cause, a love of sacrifice which fortifies them in their ordeal.

At about two steps from the door is a staircase—it is really a wooden ladder—leading to the *raison d'être* of our journey, the attic. We go up it quickly and find ourselves face to face with Father Naber, the indefatigable and affable parish priest of Konnersreuth. Behind him in the empty loft are several ecclesiastics.

This village pastor is indeed an astonishing man. It is difficult to say if it is he or the stigmatist who suffers the more by being surrounded by such crowds. No trace of fatigue or impatience can be found in the countenance of this man of average height who seems to be between the age of fifty and sixty. We read in his eyes that he also serves a great ideal, and that with all his heart and with immense ardour. In the corner near the window in the space provided by the gable there is a simple bed and on it, half-sitting, is Teresa Neumann. In the room are also three Franciscan sisters, members of the episcopal commission of which we shall speak later on.

At the entrance to Teresa's room we have the same impression as is given by an ancient Gothic cathedral. There is a certain atmosphere of sacred respect incontestably reigning there. Teresa supported by white pillows wears a white handkerchief completely covering the head ; she looks exactly like a statue of stone with hands outstretched. The blood runs from her eyes on to her face, which is of a greyish-yellow colour. Two streams of red blood can be seen, nearly an inch in width, beside that which has become blackish and is therefore a little older. A large bloodstain may be seen on the left side above the heart. Even the handkerchief on the head is saturated with blood in many places, especially at the back. On the palm of the emaciated hands is a small dimple as if caused by a bullet-wound. On the back, however, the wound is as big as a shilling piece ; it is surrounded by a circle of livid flesh ; but



there is no suppuration, and it looks like a healed wound which has been opened again. (The present writer saw hundreds and thousands of such wounds during the war.) But the wounds are not yet bleeding ; the moment has not yet come. The stigmatist has arrived at the point in this drama of the Passion where Our Lord consoles the daughters of Jerusalem, that is, probably the eighth station of the Cross. On the other hand, she has been bleeding from the eyes for eight or ten hours.

She hears nothing nor does she see anything ; the very existence of those about her is unknown to her. She is elsewhere. She is lost, absorbed by what she is contemplating, and it causes her immense suffering as she is incapable of preventing the suffering of him who is most dear to her.

In our career as a doctor, and especially during the last war, we have witnessed a great deal of suffering. For instance, the arrival of the wounded by day and by night at the hospital of Kolomeja, just before Whitsun 1916, after the break in the lines made by the Russians near Brusilov. There were not enough ambulances to carry the wounded, nor enough surgeons to dress their wounds or to perform the necessary operations. There were bodies mutilated, shattered by mines, with whole limbs destroyed, fractured skulls, men but half alive, growing cold, dying. Yet all this is surpassed by the picture of suffering presented by Teresa Neumann. The greatest tragedienne would never succeed in representing anything so astonishing and at the same time so simple and natural. We compared afterwards the impression produced by Konnersreuth with what we had seen in our very varied life and in our metapsychical researches. In our youth we saw the four quarters of the world : the wonderful beauty of the Himalayas, immense oceans,

lofty mountains rising up out of the sea, the beauty of virgin forests, the silence of deserts. Yet we have no doubt in declaring that this day at Konnersreuth is one of the most precious we have known. We saw with our own eyes that in the religious ecstasy of this poor girl—an event which has been ascribed to hysteria—there is none the less something being manifested which is incommensurate, lasting infinitely. This impression has become stronger with the passage of time.

Our next visit was to the presbytery, where we found the celebrated orientalist, Dr. Wutz, but being bound by professional secrecy he could only answer our questions with : ‘ Ah ! This Aramaic, but that is not the greatest marvel ! If you knew Teresa’s interior life, then indeed would you be astonished by its beauty. Moreover, for us the case is quite clear.’ This small, thin, extremely sagacious priest could not satisfy our immense curiosity ; but cannot the whole solution be glimpsed in these few words whose purport only struck us afterwards ? On them and on the account given us by a friend of the stigmatist of Konnersreuth we were able to base our book which appeared in 1927, where by a sort of intuition an essay at an explanation is given of these phenomena, according to the principles of Catholic mysticism, an opinion which seems every day to be more exact and well founded.

Dr. Wutz’s reserve was in no way discouraging. The same questions were put to Doctor Pabstmann, the professor of biology at Bamberg, who at that moment entered the hall of the presbytery. His great affability recompensed us for our first rebuff. Thanks to his kindness we were able to procure much authentic information without which, indeed, our book could not have been written. He was a member of the bishop’s scientific commission from the beginning, and therefore well qualified to speak. Our conversation took place



in the yard adjoining the presbytery, and there for more than an hour and a quarter we discussed the whole question. The image of this tall bearded man is still strong in our memory. So animated did our conversation become that neither sun nor rain (which fell twice while we were in the yard) could interrupt us. We shall speak further on of this interesting conversation and its results. Had it not been for those who were travelling with us we should have continued much longer.

Thus the first view we had of the stigmatist was when she was in ecstasy, and consequently any idea of conversation with her was out of the question. Just at this time a violent campaign on the part of the adversaries of Konnersreuth attributing all the phenomena to hysteria persuaded us to visit it once more ; it fell this time immediately after the Friday ecstasy. We chose for our visit Saturday, September 17, 1927 ; we were then on our way to Lourdes, as well as to the third international congress of metapsychology at Paris. We took a car at Eger. Through the good offices of Miss L. Z. we obtained permission to visit the stigmatist at the presbytery where she was then living on account of the repairs being done to the Neumann family house. After a short wait the door of the presbytery was opened. Our friend Mr. Bayer undertook the conversation, and we cannot do better than quote the account he gave in the *Nar Politika* for September 30, 1927 : ' A door opened in the corridor and Teresa came towards us. Anyone who has seen her in ecstasy would be astonished at the spiritual beauty of her face and her still more expressive eyes when she is in a normal state. I cannot help seeing in her a saint. Her calm countenance, her thin pierced hands produce a strange and fascinating impression. Even to-day the memory of this visit gives me a wholly mystical feeling.

'She takes us into the room in which she is now living, and leaning on her friend, Miss L. Z., seats herself on the bed. She feels tired after yesterday (Friday) and in addition her throat troubles are beginning again. She speaks calmly, simply. On our asking her she shows us the wounds in her hands which are covered with a scab about the size of a shilling, but there is no surrounding swelling. She tells us what she has just felt in her ecstasy of Friday. She then leaves us and it is Father Naber, accompanied by Dr. Wutz, professor of Aramaic, who comes to talk to us.

'The former's face clearly shows the marks of the worry caused by all these thousands of visits, questions by lay-people, ecclesiastics, philosophers, and people of bad faith. He is at everyone's disposal and sometimes he is obliged to answer quite idiotic questions. Whoever has seen this centre of faith and the people who are chiefly concerned would have pity on such poor victims. To accuse this girl lost in God and tortured by suffering as she is, or Father Naber who can hardly carry on for very fatigue, of imposture would require a large amount of cynicism and a complete want of common sense.'

We can heartily endorse what our friend has said. Thus we were able to speak for more than three-quarters of an hour with the most trustworthy witness of these events, one who is, moreover, competent to judge them in their true light. Once more we were able to acquire many valuable indications which enabled us to co-ordinate our ideas of the case. The question of the wounds will be treated at length later on in this chapter.

In the spring of 1928 the enemies of Konnersreuth gave currency to the rumour that all was over. As a matter of fact we were well in touch with all that was



happening there through Miss L. Z. of Franzensbad ; nevertheless, we decided to visit the stigmatist for Good Friday and the two following days. Accompanied by two Czech ecclesiastics we arrived at Konnersreuth on Maundy Thursday, April 5, 1928. One of our companions was Dr. Dorskocil, rector of the seminary at K.H., who was already provided with the permit exacted by the ecclesiastical authorities on the part of those who wished to visit Teresa Neumann. The rest of us awaited an answer from the Bishop of Ratisbon. Meanwhile we went to the presbytery, where the good parish priest received us kindly. In a conversation which lasted more than an hour he enlightened us on the matters we asked him and told us of several additional facts. Firstly, he informed us of the renewal of the Friday ecstasies, as Teresa had foretold. From Christmas 1927 until Septuagesima 1928 their place had been taken by different visions concerning the lives of the saints. He told us, too, many interesting facts about the latest phenomena connected with the stigmatist, who in a sort of half-ecstasy predicted the events which were to take place during the next few days. With a kind of clairvoyance she could answer letters to Father Naber which had not been opened. She was suffering enormously, very much more than last year. Her chest was causing trouble, she was ill with pleurisy, and in addition her joints were very painful. On Fridays she was afflicted with fainting fits. In fact during the whole of Lent 1928 she was seriously ill. When her sufferings were at their height she would pass into a state of half-ecstasy and become clairvoyant.

We gave over our afternoon to visiting the conventual church of Waldsassen which was built by the great Dinzerdorfer. We also telegraphed to the Bishop of Ratisbon to hasten the obtaining of our permit to visit the stigmatist.

The Good Friday ceremonies so well and piously carried out by Father Naber made a lasting impression on us, all the stronger on account of the thought that at a few paces off all that was now represented before us in the liturgy of the Church was taking place on the body of 'the Spouse of the Passion of Christ' in her peasant's attic. There neither space nor time existed for her in her ravishment in God. At the church we were seated just behind Teresa's father, a man in robust health. In the course of the next two days we saw all the other members of the family, who are all extremely healthy—physically and morally.

Finally we received by telegram the permission granted by Mgr. Buchberger, the Bishop of Ratisbon. Thus at one o'clock in the afternoon we climbed the wooden staircase leading to Teresa's room; it has been changed a little since. We were indeed rewarded for undertaking the journey. Although we had seen Teresa in ecstasy on the occasion of our first visit we were stupefied at her appearance, so clearly were the supernatural events she saw in vision reflected on her countenance. In her contemplation she had arrived at the moment when Our Lord nailed to the cross is in the course of his last combat. Once more we perceived this image of suffering womanhood surrounded with pillows half lying down on a poor country bed. Once more has she that indescribable expression of untold sorrow and from her face ooze two streams of blood. Once more those movements of despair; arms now lifted, now outstretched, for the Saviour is hanging on the cross and is about to die.

In comparison with the year before her appearance is even more wonderful with an intense spiritual beauty. Her face though paler and more ethereal reflects in no uncertain way the events she contemplates, events whose grandeur surpasses imagination. It seems that



the Passion is written in letters of blood on her head, which is covered with it, crowned, almost, as with a rosy diadem in octagonal form. Again, too, there is a great stain of blood on her side above the heart.

Then, too, the hands. Impossible to forget those hands ; they seem to shine. Is it an illusion or reality ? Last year they had not that appearance, although we saw them by daylight as this time. Emaciated, they seem to be of ivory, and on the back and on the palm there is something which shines like an enormous ruby. A whole circle of red stones around the wrist. It is pure blood, red, shining. But whence can this poor girl draw all this blood ? What is it that renews for her the quantities of it she has lost during the last six months ; remember, too, her complete fast from all food and drink, which makes the case even more enigmatic. How indeed is it possible that she still lives losing so much blood ?

Thus the stigmatist in her whole being, interiorly and exteriorly, makes that mystery of all mysteries live again, that which in her ceremonies of Good Friday the Church recalls with so much beauty : ‘ Behold the wood of the Cross on which the salvation of the world was suspended.’ We can only add, ‘ Come let us adore.’

Our fourth visit was unpremeditated. Returning from France we had some business at Eger, but were hesitating to go again to Konnersreuth when a card from Miss L. Z. of Franzensbad arrived asking us to obtain some goldfish for Teresa Neumann and to send them to her. Quickly we decided to take this little present to her in person, and thus it was that on Wednesday, August 8, we were once again at Konnersreuth. At the presbytery we were welcomed like old friends, and Father Naber told us for the space of a whole hour many interesting things. He astonished

us by his liveliness. 'It is only lately,' he said, 'that I feel so well; beforehand I used to suffer very often from rheumatism and stomach trouble.' This indeed made us wonder: we remembered the crowds of visitors and the continual calls upon his time which ought to have worn him out and probably endangered his health.

He confirmed what had been reported about the mystic communion of Teresa. Apart from that, and the proofs her director and confessor gave us of its truth, what we appreciated even more were the statements he made with regard to her candid love for Our Lord. 'There are no words,' he said, 'which can express for you the almost naive simplicity and devotion with which she speaks to God when she thinks there is no one present to hear her. That is one of the most astonishing things I have observed in her.'

We then went to the Neumanns' house, where we made acquaintance with the rest of the family, all of them in excellent health. The sons help their father in his trade. Two daughters work as servants in the house in which Teresa was employed, one is married and has a lovely little daughter. All at once the stigmatist comes towards us, hopping like a bird. She is obliged to do this on account of the stigmata. She admires her friend's present with childlike joy; never have we witnessed such a touching scene. The fish are put into two bowls. The best specimens Teresa takes up to her room, and while arranging them she talks of many everyday things. We were with her for nearly an hour. Never could one have believed that she could be so simple. Indeed it can be affirmed, and other writers on the case bear witness to this, that she has remained a simple country servant girl. On the other hand she is by no means feeble-minded; she has a wide-awake intelligence, and can, if need be, answer



questions with great common sense. Nor is she vain ; she prefers not to speak of herself and her astonishing ecstasies. Indeed, as Baron Aretin remarks, she is never better pleased than when in conversation one makes no reference whatever to her visions. With great simplicity she shakes hands with those of her visitors known to her, saying without the slightest trace of affectation : ‘ Good-bye, let us pray for one another.’ Can this be the attitude of a hysterical person, who according to Dr. Kurt Singer’s manual of neurological diagnosis (*Leitfaden der neurologischen Diagnostik*) should be capricious, sulky, selfish, inexact, full of imagination and extremely impressionable ?

Indeed it is impossible to insult Teresa Neumann with greater effect than by dubbing her hysterical, or accusing her of fraud or trickery.

It will be, then, to the point if the present writer as an eye-witness and doctor gives his description and judgement of that extraordinary fact which was named by the Belgian doctors at Louise Lateau’s time ‘ the disease of the five wounds.’ Before, and more especially during, the war we had occasion to examine an enormous number of wounds of all sorts, even those which had been self-inflicted. As a sworn examiner to the tribunal of the Seventh Austrian Army, a court composed of thirteen auditors, we were obliged to judge such cases and often to decide thus the life or death of the bearer of these wounds. We do not speak, then, without experience.

Already before March 1927, when a series of chances led us to Konnersreuth, we had published an article on the question—a study from a medico-psychological point of view—in a review of spirituality, *Nahlubinu*, appearing at Olmütz. This article upheld the opinion that the events of Konnersreuth could be explained by the fact of imagination seconded in a powerful way by

great desire and sentimental attachment. The imagination, completed in its function by grace—an indefinable state from a medical point of view—thus brought about the stigmata of Teresa Neumann. But the editor of the review, Father Braito, pointed out that the stigmata had been granted even to persons who did not aspire to them, to country women such as Domenico de Paradiso or Isabella Hendrix who were hindered in their work on account of them.

The opinion put forth in the article was considerably shaken by the first visit to Konnersreuth and the sight of Teresa's extreme simplicity. Further visits continued the work, and the time came when we were convinced that our thesis was no longer tenable; the case of Konnersreuth could not be explained but by the introduction of a supernatural factor, that is to say the grace of God. The author could indeed verify by his own experience the words of the parish priest, Father Naber: 'In my parish the simplest soul is Teresa Neumann.' In addition he furnished the different proofs he had been able to collect of the absolute honesty and complete truthfulness of his penitent in such a way that it was impossible to believe for an instant that Teresa had ever desired the stigmata. It is, moreover, scarcely imaginable in so simple a person; such in fact we found her to be.

We were able to see the stigmata, notably on the hands, and especially the left hand, on four separate occasions from a distance of about five feet. They looked exactly like a scar re-opened by a gun shot, such as we saw so very often during the war. The skin around the stigmata was absolutely healthy, showing neither irritation nor inflammation and without a trace of pus. This was on the occasion of the first visit.

The second visit was undertaken, primarily, with the idea of obtaining some notion of the psychic state of a



person so subject to attacks from strangers, and to examine the stigmata at closer range. Teresa took off her mittens and we were able to examine her hand from a distance of about one foot. Our attention was acute. Are these marks true, or can anything suspicious be discerned? The margin of the wound especially is an important criterion. But Teresa's wounds were of an extraordinary beauty. Exactly in the middle of the back of the hand, surrounded by delicate thin white skin, could be seen an embedded red scab (it was the second day after the ecstasy), or more accurately a film of the same colour adhering to the skin which showed, unquestionably, that a loss of tissue had taken place. (A wound is thus defined in medicine.) The surrounding skin was pure and white, a little emaciated, but in no way changed by former or recent bleedings. In fact such discoloration was completely absent both on this and on later visits. That is why, without asking his permission, Dr. Wasserman's opinion, published in a review of practical medicine (*Praktický Lékař*) may be relegated to the domain of imagination; he suspected an artificial origin of the wounds. It is a beautiful dry wound, evidently of a nervous character, which does not heal; nor does it suppurate or inflame. In the middle of the hollow of the hand is a similar wound, roughly the size of a bean, with its edges embedded in the flesh. It was impossible to examine the connection between the two wounds; we had no permission to do so, and were without the necessary instruments. Moreover great importance need not be attached to this question; we can content ourselves with evidence furnished by credible witnesses. It is worthy of remark that the wounds show no signs of treatment, medical or otherwise; nor yet the slightest trace of an aseptic or antiseptic.

We were privileged at the time of our first visit on a Good Friday, by special permission of Teresa's venerable

director, to see the stigmata at close range and to remark how they bled. The scabs or films were deep black as if covered with a varnish of dried blood. Once again they showed not the slightest trace of chemical irritation ; there was no inflammation. Towards the middle they were raised a little, as if it were granulous tissue, although it did not by any means look like it, and there flowed from this part a continuous stream of human blood. It was quite visible to the naked eye in spite of the smallness of the wound. Sufficient blood flowed, even, to form rings round the wrist as wide as the human finger.

At our last visit to Konnersreuth the stigmata were almost forgotten in the course of conversation. On leaving, we shook Teresa's right hand, and, without thinking, perhaps a littler harder than we should have done had we remembered. Luckily it was not very hard, but she felt it. We begged her pardon, and she very obligingly showed us the wounds on her hands. It was a Wednesday. The stigmata appeared to be smaller, being in a state of regression, and were about the size of the scab referred to above. All around the skin was clean once again ; no sign of irritation or inflammation. During her conversation and while carrying out her daily tasks in the house Teresa paid no attention whatever to her wounds. We noticed this in the course of our visit.

It does not seem at all possible that any result could be obtained by medical treatment. The wounds show no tendency to heal, and we know by experience how difficult it is to heal an ulcer on the leg, or sores caused by a long confinement to bed. Jacobi himself insists on the incurable nature of the stigmata. Two hundred years ago by order of the bishop surgeons of the time ill-treated Veronica Giuliani—the last stigmatist to be canonized—for five years without being able to



rid her of these marks. They were no more successful than their modern colleagues who ten years ago tried to do the same for the Capuchin, Father Pius, in Apulia.

It will not be out of place to quote here another opinion on the stigmata : that of Görres, who, writing eighty years ago, explained these phenomena in an interesting way :

‘ When the favour of the stigmata is granted to a soul, at once by the very act which renders it like unto the object of its affection, Jesus crucified, the exterior process begins. Thus the body which is bound up with this soul, becomes like unto the body of Jesus, bringing about in this way the appearance of the stigmata. In showing itself exteriorly love causes the wounds, the stigmata. Even so does the soul communicate to the body what it has received.’

He explains the meaning of the stigmata in the following terms :

‘ It is a bodily union which beginning by the Eucharist is brought to completion by the stigmata. That is why a more powerful life-force throbs in these wounds from the moment that the Lord of light has entered into the creature who bears them. The sacrifice of the Cross which is celebrated on the altar in an unbloody manner, is represented in realistic fashion in the stigmatists as a perpetual memory of this act of infinite worth. The Crucified, on the very days his Passion is commemorated, bleeds again from all his wounds. Thus ever present he lives for ever.’

We did not examine the other wounds. They are not readily accessible to an ordinary examination, though Teresa’s way of walking on her heels—in a series of jerks and little jumps—shows their existence well enough. The wound in the side is thirty millimetres in

length, bleeds profusely, and is very painful. On July 22, 1927, it soaked a long gauze bandage in blood—it was wound round her about twenty times in all—and according to Teresa the wound becomes deeper. All this is noted in the acts of the episcopal commission. The stigmata have also been photographed by a special photographer on behalf of the Holy See. In addition, they have been examined at Konnersreuth by an experienced religious, a member of the commission for the cause of Anne-Catherine Emmerich, Father Agostino Gemelli, O.F.M., rector of the University of the Sacred Heart at Milan.



## CHAPTER VII

### IMPRESSIONS OF OTHER WITNESSES

**I**N this chapter will be found opinions of some other eye-witnesses, who were as profoundly moved as was the present writer.

Firstly, then, Dr. Weissl, who in the *Vossische Zeitung*<sup>1</sup> wrote :

‘ I arrived here not to feel but to see. I enter and I see. But at the same time I feel within myself a deep sympathy . . . and I admire. What ? A spectre ? Never could I have believed that I should see with my own eyes anything approaching what takes place here. A country girl suffers the Passion of Christ, and she suffers it with such intensity that her two eyes stream with blood. Her wounded heart bleeds and the linen which covers her head is coloured by blood which flows from the wounds on it.

‘ I looked on with astonishment. I see before me, on this bed, suffering personified. The look is fixed, and the eyes stare, but without an object. Teresa shows no interest in her visitors. Her mouth is part open, her hands, inert, stretched before her seem to seek for something, groping in the air, then drop to her breast. And those eyes ! Never have I seen such eyes in a case of hysteria or madness. Deluged with blood, swollen, the eyelids half stuck,

<sup>1</sup> August 17, 18 and 20, 1927.

they gaze into the distance, now here, now there, as if to avoid looking on such terrible sufferings. And then again blood streams down her cheeks. Teresa falls into an ecstasy, tears of blood fall, and the marks of the wounds of Christ appear very quickly on her ivory-white hands.'

His co-religionist Max Brod, a well-known publicist on the staff of the *Prager Tageblatt*, wrote :<sup>1</sup>

' A woman is in bed in a room ; a being consumed by her religious enthusiasm, driven on to the extreme consequences of her love, even to complete identification with its object, in suffering and in danger. Teresa is an extraordinary personage. Her soul has the supreme strength of love, but around her garret hatred rages. Her pure soul is shown to the world . . . and it is welcomed not with loving words but with controversies, fanaticism and hate. Thus the world answers ; it knows no other way.

' Thousands pass before a being who is almost dying and who has just fallen into an ecstasy. What touches you the most is the simplicity of her ejaculations ; for she speaks neither literary nor biblical German. The quaintness of her dialect takes on a persuasive force as much by her frankness as by the picturesqueness of her expressions. Each Friday the sufferings of the Passion are renewed for her, its spectator.'

Dr. Reismann, a Protestant, wrote in the *Tag* of September 6, 1927 :

' The features are changed by incalculable suffering. She wrings her little white hands as if her heart were breaking. In truth it is ; the blood which flows from it has saturated all the bandages placed

<sup>1</sup> September 21, 22 and 23, 1927.



upon it. This girl weeps tears of blood. From her closed eyes blood streams out and runs down her disfigured countenance. It begins first by little drops, but ends by becoming a veritable stream and covers both her cheeks. A thousand impressions pass over this face ; terrible events seem to have disfigured Teresa's features. She looks, all the time, as if she were looking at something, listening. Her body becomes agitated ; she suffers Our Lord's scourging. Suddenly when the executioners brutally place the crown of thorns on the Saviour's head the wounds in her head discolour all the linen which covers it. In her pain Teresa raises her hands several times as if to snatch away the thorns.'

We discussed at length with Professor Pabstmann the whole question of the bleeding from the eyes. Whence does it come ? Pabstmann, a member of the scientific commission, has several times examined this phenomenon from the time it began. There is no question of its being a fraud. He has established that at the beginning of the visions when Christ is on the Mount of Olives, Teresa's eyes are as clear as crystal. Towards the morning as he suffers in the court of Caiphas the tears are slightly reddened with blood, and become, at the scourging, entirely of blood. They remain thus until the end of the drama. Whence do they come ? Before, during and after the ecstasies, Teresa has been frequently examined by the episcopal commission. Nowhere is there a trace of a wound, nowhere even a scar proving the existence of such a wound. There is no other explanation than that the tear glands, in place of tears, produce blood, and each week at that. It cannot be argued that this bleeding takes the place of the periods, especially as such a thing is unknown in medical science.

There is, then, an immense and real suffering. A well-known tragedienne staying at Marienbad, quite near Konnersreuth, said: 'It is really the most profound impression of my life. Even if I rehearsed for a century I should never succeed in representing suffering in so realistic a fashion and so naturally.'

Teresa becomes a real victim. Another eye-witness, L. Kaspar,<sup>1</sup> writes: 'In leaving I shook hands with her mother, who was saying the Rosary. She was moved and her eyes flooded with tears as she said to me in a low voice: "Oh, Father, what a sore trial it is for me to see all these people come to gaze on my daughter, suffering and all covered with blood as she is!" After such an utterance how could anyone state, even scientifically, that the poor girl is only posing, is hysterical?'

It remains for us to quote a few eye-witnesses of the phenomena who can testify to Teresa's character and state of mind; only thus can the reader form a correct concept of the matter.

Here are a few words of a conversation the present writer had with Professor Pabstmann:

'Is it suggestion? Then why has not Teresa a deep and bleeding wound on the right shoulder since she suffers there more, perhaps, than in the hands and feet? Moreover she is so normal in all that takes place in her soul that indeed it is astonishing to find such extraordinary phenomena. As for the stigmata, I have often observed them, continuously from a Thursday evening until the following Friday afternoon. I have even seen the scar, intact at first—it is formed by a film on the outside of the hand—swell up; then the blood begins to appear, a little

<sup>1</sup> *Pozorovatel*, August 18, 1927.



at first, but in ever-increasing quantities until at last it bursts through the membrane.'

Dr. Benès, of the University of Prague, who went upwards of five times to Konnersreuth, wrote in the *Pražském Věčerníku*<sup>1</sup> (a Prague evening newspaper) :

' The parish priest Naber told me : " I have known Teresa for sixteen years. She was my pupil. Although a good and pious girl she was never in any way unbalanced. In fact she was the most reasonable of creatures." I asked him if Teresa had desired the stigmata. He answered me : " Never ; on the contrary she wished to imitate S. Teresa's ' little way.' As the latter had no remarkable signs Teresa Neumann, also, not only did not desire to have them, but would have remained simple and unknown. That is why she is more vexed than pleased by the fact of her stigmata." '

Dr. Benès saw her at the beginning of all these events when it was still possible to talk to her. He continues :

' We spoke with Teresa for about half an hour. She talks in a way simple beyond expression. With childish glee she shows us the new leaves on her plants. But she can listen attentively. She began to laugh wholeheartedly when the parish priest told her that there were many who considered that she was nervous and hysterical. Neither during the whole length of the recital of her wonderful cures, nor at the arrival of still more visitors, did she give evidence of the slightest embarrassment or im-

<sup>1</sup> July 31, 1926.

patience. The same amiability to all. Her answers are extraordinary in their simplicity.'

Mr. John E. Urban, another eye-witness of her sufferings, who saw her during Holy Week 1927, wrote on April 23 of that year :

' On Holy Saturday I was close to her bed with Professor Pabstmann. I asked his opinion as I had come to Konnersreuth prejudiced and only by chance. He answered me very firmly that he had observed the stigmatist for nine months, noting everything she said and examining the import of her statements. And he went on to say that she was calm and in good spirits, as far, that is, as was compatible with so much suffering. It would be difficult to find a woman as calm and wide-awake as Teresa Neumann. Her condition does not affect her tranquillity. During the week she is extraordinarily energetic and very intelligent. There is no trace, even of affectation. He added that he had often examined her to see if she were not hysterical, and he was quite convinced that she was not.'

In spite of that there has been no relinquishing of the plea of hysteria, all the more serious since it comes from medical authorities, notably Professor Ewald, Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Erlangen.<sup>1</sup> He observed and examined Teresa and gave an account of his observations. Von Lama says of his book :<sup>2</sup> ' Professor Ewald, of Erlangen, saw fit, again in this case, to change his position afterwards.

<sup>1</sup> See *Münchener medizinische Wochenschrift*, November 11, 1927.

<sup>2</sup> Lama, *Therese Neumann : A Stigmatist of our day*, page 206. (Milwaukee, 1929).



Words which are penetrating and exact ; confirmed, moreover, by credible witnesses. Let us examine, then, in more detailed fashion this ghost of hysteria, this poor 'maid of all work' who has to save the honour of medical science each time it finds itself unable to explain.

That the marvels of Konnersreuth are by no means confined to the stigmata and Teresa's wonderful contemplation of the Passion may be seen from the testimony of the following witnesses. More and more are we brought face to face with those phenomena which she has in common with other stigmatists.

In the first place there is her way of being sensitive to hidden and unknown things ; her knowledge of the human heart. This was first noticed early in 1927. M. A. Bayer speaks of it at length in the *Narodni Politika* (October 2, 1927).

'Teresa Neumann predicted to a certain professor, a sceptic, the great fright he was to suffer in an accident. An hour after his departure it was learnt that his motor-car had run into a tree and was completely wrecked, without, however, hurting the occupants. She recognized at once that one of her visitors was an immoral woman, and that another meant to make a profit out of the events which had taken place at Konnersreuth ; no one else knew anything of the matter, and had not even suspected it. To a bishop she began to speak of a stigmatist in his diocese before he himself had had time to allude to her. (The stigmatist in question was Barbara Pfister.) A man brought her relics from Italy. Teresa at once recognized their authenticity and gave the name of the saint from whose body they had been taken. She was able to describe

incidents in the life of a saint of whom she had never heard before.'

A friend of the present writer who has lectured on Konnersreuth recounts the following incident :

' A man called on Father Naber, the parish priest, and asked permission to examine Teresa's stigmata, saying he was a medical man. The permission was granted and the visitor was taken to see the stigmatist. She took off her left glove and showed her hand to the doctor. Suddenly she put her right hand on his shoulder and said to him quietly, " But, Father, what have you done ? " The " doctor " turned pale, then blushed with shame and left the room. It was learnt afterwards that he was an apostate priest from South Bohemia.'

*The Catholic* of Chicago has the following interesting account in its number of February 3, 1928 : ' Bishop Schrembs returned to Cleveland last Friday and describes the extraordinary phenomena of Konnersreuth in the following words : " While I was there—during Teresa's Friday ecstasy—her mother came into the room, already filled with a great number of pilgrims. Mgr. James A. MacFadden was sitting behind me, her mother at my side. Teresa, who could not have known her mother was there, said suddenly, ' Mother, the man beside you ' (that is myself) ' is from this country ; he was born not far from here, but lives beyond a great ocean and works untiringly for God. He has still much to accomplish. I have something to communicate to him alone.' The pilgrims began to leave the room. When it came to Mgr. MacFadden's turn Teresa said : ' This man can stay.' Thus he was the only witness of my conversation with Teresa which lasted for three-quarters of an hour. She



penetrated to the most secret parts of my soul and told me things known only to God and myself. This experience was stronger than I, and I began to cry. Teresa spoke of my past and my future. She described in detail the priests of my diocese." "

## CHAPTER VIII

BY THEIR FRUITS YE SHALL KNOW THEM

TOWARDS the middle of February 1928, after having given lectures on Konnersreuth for more than three months, we received a letter addressed simply : Dr. Hynek, Prague. Its contents were such as to compel attention. The following is the most important part of it :

‘ I take the liberty to tell you of a small event in connection with the enigma of Konnersreuth. My brother, John Glabazña, a retired farmer of Mokré Lazcé near Opava (Silesia), aged sixty-seven, was cured suddenly of a deadly disease by the intercession of the servant of God, Teresa Neumann. Hoping that this occurrence will interest you I will relate it in detail.

‘ At the beginning of 1927 my brother felt extreme pains in the nose. He could no longer breathe through the nostrils, his nose swelled, became red and gave off a disagreeable smell. Flesh began to grow within it with tremendous rapidity, almost like a mushroom. He had sharp pains in the head and the eyes. He could not sleep, food disgusted him, and he was rapidly wasting away. . . .’

At this point the writer details the opinions of several doctors, whose names he gives. He continues :

‘ Finally he was told that as all remedies had failed he would have to undergo an operation. The



invalid went to Prague to the hospital of the Brothers of Charity. The doctors declared, after having made an examination, that this dangerous disease could only be cured by an operation which, they acknowledged, would be a serious matter. As the chief surgeon (Professor Bayer) was absent, they told him to come back at the end of a month and in the meantime advised him to make his will. As my brother preferred to die rather than to be operated upon he next tried the hospital at Opava, but there, too, he received the same answer.

‘ Meanwhile I had read a booklet in German on Teresa Neumann, and I confided to my brother that I proposed to write to this privileged soul and ask her to pray for him. On September 19, 1927, we wrote a letter to the stigmatist, as well as another to Father Naber, the parish priest, asking that Teresa would be so kind as to think of our poor invalid on Friday, September 23, 1927.

‘ That same Friday the pains in the nose reached their climax, and to such a degree that my brother thought he was lost. Suddenly towards four in the afternoon an unknown force seemed to traverse his body with the speed of lightning and the pains ceased immediately. The disease disappeared at once, and, so far, there has been no relapse. My brother is safe and sound. It is an incontestable fact that without remedies or ointments the disease disappeared completely and suddenly.

‘ Believe me, etc.,

‘ FRANCIS GLABAZŇA  
(retired schoolmaster).

‘ MOKRÉ LAZCÉ,

‘ NEAR OPAVA,

‘ *February 11, 1928.*’

It can be imagined with what haste we went to the hospital of the Brothers of Charity, sought out the Prior and asked him for the details of Glabazña's case. He told me that he remembered the case well, as well as the patient's visit at the beginning of August. He added that the tumour in the nose was in a state of decomposition and the smell produced was extremely unpleasant for the other patients in the same ward. The disease was so far advanced that an operation was out of the question.

He went on to say: 'As a surgeon yourself you know better than I do how such an operation would have disfigured him, and this without any hope of a cure. That is why we were glad to send him away under pretext that the chief surgeon was absent. No one ever expected to see him return at the end of the month stipulated; death seemed inevitable, the disease was so far advanced. . . . However he wrote to tell us that he had been completely cured without any operation after having made a novena to S. Teresa of Lisieux and being recommended to the prayers of Teresa Neumann.'

The kind offices of the Prior enabled us to copy the details to be found in the hospital register.

1927.

Case No. 1481.

Bed No. 143.

*Name and position.*

John Glabazña, private individual.

*Age.*

67.

*State.*

Married.

*Religion.*

Catholic.

*Admitted.*

August 8.

*Discharged.*

August 10: an improvement, but not cured.

*Name of disease.*

Tumor nasi (Sarcoma?).

*Date of origin of disease.*



The patient has suffered from nasal catarrh for several years. Since last January he has been unable to breathe through the nose. A specialist treated polypus, and several times (about fifteen) he was able to take out portions by scraping and burning the affected place. The nose becomes bigger in one part, and the bone is swollen and painful. On the right side of the nose may be seen a large tumour in a state of decomposition which gives off a disagreeable odour. The patient can breathe, but with difficulty. Report of August 10: The patient has been sent away with instructions to return for an operation in six weeks' time. Temperature normal.

Naturally we were all eagerness to correspond with Mr. Glabazña in person, and an occasion offered itself on April 22, when we were to give a lecture at Opava which is quite near his residence.

By an extraordinary chance at Eastertime we made the acquaintance of Dr. Cornell Veitz, who had just taken charge of the clinic for diseases of the nose and ears in Opava. He was asked to have the goodness to examine a patient we should send him and to write down the result of his investigations. At the same time Mr. Glabazña was told to go to Dr. Veitz' clinic and to bring us his certificate afterwards.

At the end of our lecture on April 22 we noticed a tall man with a beard who advanced towards the platform; it was Mr. Glabazña with his brother—the one with whom we had been in correspondence. The following is the certificate he brought from Dr. Cornell Veitz:

*Certificate for Mr. John Glabazña.*

The exterior of the nose is sunken: a cavity in the cartilaginous wall. The osseous wall has no

visible defect. Subsequent examination of the vomer showed no deformation. The interior of the nose has some general scabs, but there is no morbid alteration.

DR. CORNELL.

OPAVA,

*April 22, 1928.*

After a long conversation with the two brothers we left furnished with a rough draft and a letter from Mr. Glabazña himself by means of which we were able to reconstruct the case.

In June 1926 he caught a cold in the head which, instead of getting better in the ordinary way, continued until the month of December, when the patient's nose began to swell and caused him great pain, which as time went on increased. The left nostril became blocked by a red fleshy growth so that he could no longer breathe through it. After Christmas he went to see his doctor, who prescribed an ointment and then a powder; but at the third visit he was sent to see a specialist—Dr. Francis Navratil at Moravská Ostrava.

The latter observing the gravity and the probable length of the disease advised an immediate operation, and this he carried out himself. He was able to extract the polypi by means of a cord and slip knot and he scraped the infected spot. He put in a plug and told him to come back in a week's time. Then he performed again the same operation. On the occasion of the third visit the doctor observed that the disease had spread to the right nostril, so that he cleaned it out as well as the left, especially as the patient could no longer breathe through the nose and risked suffocation, more especially during the night. These operations were very painful. Nevertheless Mr. Glabazña continued to consult Dr. Navratil until the end of June. In



the course of his twenty visits he was operated on sixteen or seventeen times.

In spite of this treatment the nose went on swelling more and more, continued to become stopped up, and caused frightful pains to the patient, pains which were almost unbearable. Especially the pains in the head were very acute and no remedy sufficed to arrest them. He could no longer sleep, he was obliged to breathe through the mouth and suffered from his eyes. But what worried him most was that he felt very weak and incapable of doing any work. In five months he lost seventeen kilograms (about two and a half stone).

To put an end to all this he asked the doctor to tell him frankly what he thought about the case. The latter answered that he was not suffering from cancer but from a disease very much like it, serious and lengthy. He sent him to the clinic for an operation whose seriousness he did not hide.

At the beginning of July Mr. Glabazña undertook treatment at the hands of Dr. Lichtwitz, who tried to get rid of the growth by corrosive liquids which did not cause so great pain to the patient. Unfortunately at the end of fourteen visits the treatment produced no lasting result, and the doctor told him the seriousness of his condition and added that there was but one remaining hope, a final operation in a first-class clinic.

Mr. Glabazña then went to Prague to the hospital of the Brothers of Charity. We already know the sequel. He himself wrote of this occurrence: 'The opinion of the doctor at Prague in no way calmed my fears. I knew that even the most serious of operations would be useless to me. I promised to return within the time specified and departed for the holy mountain of Příbram to pray to, and ask counsel of, the Blessed Virgin and to prepare myself for death.'

‘ I had told my three brothers of the outcome of my journey to Prague. The eldest, Mgr. Eustace Glabazña, decided that the whole family should make a novena in honour of the Most Blessed Virgin, S. Joseph, S. Anthony, and S. Teresa of the Child Jesus. Each of us had to invoke one of these saints. To me fell the Saint of Lisieux.’

(Immediately before this last act of confidence in the powers of heaven Mr. Glabazña had visited the local hospital at Opava to consult the surgeon-in-charge, Dr. Losert, who likewise advised him to be operated on. On this occasion a part of the tumour was removed at the patient’s own desire and sent to the pathological institute at Prague for examination under the microscope. As a matter of fact this was done at Opava itself in the dissecting department of the hospital.)

‘ The second day of the novena my brother, the schoolmaster, told me that it would be a good idea to ask for the prayers of the privileged virgin of Konnersreuth. We knew of her, the visions she had of the Passion of our Saviour, and how he dealt familiarly with her, from a German pamphlet. I accepted my brother’s proposal with eagerness and asked him to send off the letter.

‘ On Friday, September 23, I had such a terrible pain in the head that I dared not move for fear that it should cause my death. This awful tension lasted the whole morning and until four o’clock in the afternoon. At that moment exactly it ceased, suddenly. I cried out aloud, calling to my wife : “ I am cured, I am cured ! ” And from that moment I have been safe and sound. As I learnt afterwards it was that same Friday that all my brothers finished their novena.’

Three days later Mr. Glabazña went to see Dr. Losert, who had told him to come to him on September 26. The man of science was astounded, and having



examined him, exclaimed : ' My friend, the right side of your nose has completely healed. What is happening ? If you go on like this you will soon be completely well.'

Two months afterwards Mr. Glabazña again went to see Dr. Losert, who, greatly astonished, was able to pronounce a complete cure. In the same way Dr. Lichtwitz sent for him, and told him that he had been cured miraculously.

Mr. Glabazña continues his account : ' Thus, since September 23, 1927, I have been in good health, and I attribute my cure to the greatest of all physicians, Jesus Christ himself, who by the intercession of the saints already mentioned and the prayers of Teresa Neumann has vouchsafed to have pity on me. I shall proclaim this until my dying day in honour and praise of the divine goodness.'

After enumerating his public acts of thanksgiving he finishes with the following words : ' The account of my cure is the truth, and I am prepared to confirm it on oath.'

A last detail which brings out the gravity of the disease in a striking manner. Mr. Glabazña had in his youth composed some poetry, and being appreciated in his locality as a man of worth, the newspapers of Opava had already prepared an article *in memoriam* with a portrait. There can be no doubt that a fatal issue of the disease was expected, was looked on as inevitable.

Naturally we have not accepted so extraordinary a case without examining it from all angles. Discreetly we asked the four doctors concerned for their evidence. And we were especially interested in the microscopic examination made at the regional hospital at Opava. For this reason a copy of the dossier of the case and the report of the analysis was asked of Dr. Cornell

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Veitz, the surgeon-in-chief of the department for nasal diseases. As Mr. Glabazña was not resident at the hospital no dossier was forthcoming, but he was able to let us have the report of the analysis, of which the following is a reproduction :

*Report No.*

*Name.* John Glabazña.

*Institution.* Dr. Losert. (E1) (671).

*Report of the department of analysis and dissection.*

*No.* H 719/1927

17/9 1927.

Tumor nasi : a multi-cellular sarcomatous tumour  
(Lympho-Sarcoma ?).

(Official seal of the department.)

30/4/28.

DR. VYBORA.

After such an exact official confirmation no doctor can doubt that the patient was suffering from one of the most malignant forms of tumour known, more dangerous perhaps than cancer itself, especially on account of the way in which it infects other organs of the body. There was really no need to seek any farther ; nevertheless we asked for Dr. Navratil's evidence. By negligence or by lack of enthusiasm for the truth he says he cannot recall Mr. Glabazña's visits. However, we were well rewarded by the amiability of Dr. Lichtwitz, who, although a Jew, wrote a long letter (dated June 10, 1928) in which he said that he had only lately sent for Glabazña for examination and auscultation, and that the impression this man made on him was that of a farmer in complete health ; he had gained ten kilograms. Alone he could perform any field work. The nose showed a depression. There was a fairly large hollow about the size of a penny and quite smooth round the edges, appearing on the



transversal ; but it was quite free from all scab or other trace of suppuration.

Dr. Losert told us that the dissecting department had discovered that the patient was suffering from multi-cellular lympho-sarcoma. 'He was treated on several occasions with X-rays, but he says that they brought no relief. His cure came about instantaneously one Friday when he was in relation with Konnersreuth.' We are grateful to our colleague who has not been afraid of the truth.

There only remained Konnersreuth to complete our inquiry. Firstly we learnt from Miss L. Z. of Franzensbad that Teresa Neumann receives a whole mass of letters of this kind every day, but that she tries to satisfy all those who ask her aid in such troubles. Father Naber, the parish priest, told us the same thing.

Basing our conclusions, then, on the documents (which we hold at the disposition of the ecclesiastical authorities) we believe we are right in asserting :

1. That Mr. John Glabazña of Mokré Lazcé was suffering from an incurable disease.
2. That—according to the evidence of competent medical men—he has been completely cured since September 23, 1927.
3. That this cure could not have taken place in a natural way.

Indeed how else can be explained this wonderful cure of these tumours? Because before all it is the tumour which has to disappear. What has become of those cells which a little while before were so extraordinarily vital? Have they passed into the blood or into the secreted liquids of the body? Had they done so they would have set up an even more pernicious and deadly infection, as indeed was remarked at the time of the

X-ray treatment. Where then can they have gone without harming the body? Whence has disappeared all this poison of the tumours without leaving any trace? Questions which are unanswerable.

Only the ecclesiastical authorities can establish how far a miracle can be discerned in all this. But it is none the less remarkable that such an event should take place on the day and at the very hour that Teresa Neumann completed her sufferings of reparation, endured with Christ on the Cross.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE HYPOTHESIS OF HYSTERIA

ON all those who pride themselves in being modern—permeated as they are in the superficial and arid doctrine of positivist psychology, which is full of materialistic teaching and which not so long ago was flourishing on account of the intellectual laziness of atheists—the events of Konnersreuth come as an unpleasant surprise. How can religion, that belief in God which was thrown overboard with so little difficulty, be true after all, and be confirmed, moreover, by such inexplicable and incomprehensible incidents? Does this awful thing exist; this phenomenon independent of all physics and chemistry? Is there, indeed, personal responsibility for our actions; an after life and a final reward? Despairing, the modernist has recourse to science by whose prowess he is already dazzled. And his protectress never disappoints him!

‘Konnersreuth!’ We can imagine her saying, ‘there is not, there cannot be, there must not be anything supernatural in these events.’ This dogma of science is a comfortable one. ‘Teresa Neumann is merely hysterical. It is all hysteria, a disease, pathological. And you others, who are healthy, why should you worry yourselves on her account? It is a certain poverty of spirit to be pitied and should be treated in a hospital like all religious failings. Has not the high priest of modern psycho-analysis (a Moravian Jew)

proved it in his work, *The Future of an Illusion*? His followers, and there are many even among learned men, will unmask for you without difficulty her weakness of soul, the perversity of her unsatisfied sex, etc., for all is contained in hysteria. Do not be anxious; think no more of it. We will fulfil our mission on your behalf. Go on sleeping and make the most of life.' Thus speak those sceptics who judge Konnersreuth and the events that take place there with such unbecoming superficiality. Is it not sufficient to dub a man hysterical to destroy all his moral value?

But what is to prevent us turning on this question the very beams of the light of medical science? Democracy is discussion. What, really, is this disease which renders such immense services to the sceptics? In books on medicine it is called *Crux medicorum*, so many are the difficulties encountered in its treatment. In practice, in dealing with confused enigmatical cases where there is nothing upon which a diagnosis may be based, but where the doctor must say *something*, hysteria is the veritable *Deus ex machina* which saves his reputation.

Let us open, then, the books of science and see what we can find at this source. Let us try to form a personal opinion on the question of whether it is opportune or not to invoke hysteria in the case we are dealing with. Is the picture of this disease, as it is painted by the different medical authorities, always the same? Is it applicable to the phenomena of Konnersreuth?

Fifty or sixty years ago the celebrated Parisian, Dr. Charcot, gave us a description of hysteria together with its classic signs or marks on the human body, hysterical stigmata (which must not be confused with the religious stigmata), its more or less acute crises, the vacillating and contradictory character caused by it.



Now, is this description of the disease acceptable to-day? Can our Teresa be fitted into this class of patient as if she were being clapped into a strait waistcoat?

To avoid confusion we must affirm that we have the greatest esteem for all science really worthy of the name, that in fact is knowledge—but this does not prevent us from declaring war unrelentlessly on pseudo-scientific hypotheses, the empty words which appear under its cloak, hypnotism, and all other fraudulent usages of the word. Even a mere layman in these matters cannot help feeling that this idea of hysteria is not at all clear; were it otherwise would all the different doctors and scientists contradict each other? We refer to their opinions on the events of Konnersreuth. But the same confusion, the same obscurity pervades not only the lower grade 'scientists,' but even those of the topmost rung of the ladder.

Take the treatise on psychiatry of one of the most remarkable professors of our time, Dr. Bleuler.<sup>1</sup> What is our astonishment to find that he has completely demolished the accustomed idea of hysteria. He has not even spared the physical marks of the disease. For him they exist no longer. In the same way the very word 'hysteria' is no longer to be found in the records of his clinic at Zurich. The definition of the disease suffers the same fate. According to Bleuler all that, before, was negligently classified as 'hysteria,' on account of our newer knowledge of psycho-analysis and psychology is nothing else than 'an abnormal form of reaction on exterior life.' Thus have we progressed in our definition of this one-time proscribed evil. We pass over Professor Schleich's book, *Gedankenmacht u. Hysterie*,<sup>2</sup> in which he proves that it is in this very disease that the immaterial principle which regulates

<sup>1</sup> 3rd edition 1920,

<sup>2</sup> Rewolt, Berlin, 1920.

the whole body appears most powerfully. We can but collect, here, the most extraordinary of our adversaries' opinions.

Dr. Kohoutova, a confirmed opponent of Konnersreuth, is obliged to recognize that 'hysteria is full of uncertainty, confusion and difficulty. With each patient it is different, and it can be said that with the same person it is continually changing, imitating real diseases.'<sup>1</sup> It is, then, the veritable chameleon of the medical museum. Dr. Kröner, of Berlin, plays with the idea of this antiquated term of medicine, though, on the other hand, he writes sympathetically enough of Teresa Neumann from a metapsychic point of view. We leave aside Dr. Weissl's juggling with terms: he discounts all idea of hysteria in Teresa Neumann, but explains her long fast by her hysterical difficulties in swallowing! We cite, for its curiosity, the opinion of Dr. Stephen: 'We define as "hysteria" a faculty by which the organism comes to produce *processus* which are inaccessible to it in its normal condition, and which are produced in spite of our will or subconsciousness; without, that is, any conscious psychic action. . . . In other words, and in the scientific sense of the word, we are all hysterical, and it is only the degree of its intensity which varies, and that enormously. There is no dividing line between hysteria and normality. With Teresa it is the very genius of hysteria.'<sup>2</sup> With these confusing terms he thinks to support, perhaps, Professor Ewald: 'A great many people who receive strong psychic impressions are capable of being hysterical; . . . many worthy of the highest esteem have at one time or another shown all the signs of hysteria.' At last the magic formula! We have only to be hysterical for us all

<sup>1</sup> *Ceské Slovo*, August 23, 1927.

<sup>2</sup> *Frankfurter Zeitung*, November 26, 1927.



to become geniuses ! To put the finishing touch on this array we found in the book of a modern author, who is recognized as an authority in the world of science,<sup>1</sup> such a reformation and overthrowing of the terminology of hysteria as is only comparable to that of the vanquished armies at the end of the Great War.

But with what does Professor Ewald, that follower of the old school, reproach Teresa ? His 'valuable' scientific opinion is so well analysed in Geiger's book that it should be read in the original to be thoroughly appreciated. He makes a very just distinction between the declarations of medicine and the explanations or opinions of medical men. When we re-read the declaration of the professional psychiatrist it gave us the same impression as it did Geiger : 'Is not Teresa absolutely healthy, in her nerves and general physique ? She has not even the hysterical signs in question. If only everyone were as healthy as she ! In short she is a pattern of health and purity of character.'<sup>2</sup> And he continues : 'Before her accident she was typical of physical strength and health, and there would be no reason to conclude that she was suffering from hysteria. During her whole life before the accident and in all the members of her family no sign of nervous pre-disposition can be found.'

In all this chaotic conflict of opinion we prefer that of the late Dr. Heveroch, professor at the University of Prague, whose classes we had the advantage of attending. He defined hysteria, clearly and penetratingly, as an exaggerated cult of self and as a lowering of the moral standard. Thus, we examined the enigma of Konnersreuth from this double viewpoint.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. E. Kretschmer, *Über Hysterie*. (Leipzig, 1927.)

<sup>2</sup> Geiger, *op. cit.*, page 31.

Firstly, then, the exaggerated cult of self. Dr. Reissmann says: 'The usual symptoms of hysteria include the continual effort to make oneself noticed, a sign of interior inferiority.' But all that is wanting in Teresa Neumann. This is the opinion of a doctor.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Hollsteiner writes in the *Reichspost* (December 25, 1926): 'Hysteria can no longer be cited. Its marks: exaggerated sensitiveness, cult of self, pathological state of continual lying; all these are completely absent. There is only one point in which I noticed any trace of scrupulosity in Teresa; she would never say anything untrue.'

To Dr. Ewald's reproach that there was something of the theatrical in the sufferings which take place on Fridays, Geiger having refuted the idea goes on to say: 'During the whole of Friday and until Saturday evening none of her surroundings exists for Teresa. Any impartial witness would confirm the statement.' Mgr. Kiefer says, on page 19 of his book already cited in this chapter: 'Spectators should notice more especially the physical and moral sacrifices they demand of Teresa in coming to see her in crowds as they do. It is true that her surroundings do not exist for her when she is in ecstasy, but it is already sufficiently difficult to bear all this crowd on the other days: Thursday, Saturday and Sunday. She has declared that to be exposed to so many curious eyes was more painful to her than any other sufferings.' The present writer was able to remark this on September 30, 1927. On two occasions during the afternoon she had to be carried to the room in the rectory. Baron Aretin in the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* of August 5, 1927, declares: 'I do not remember having seen anyone so

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Mgr. Kiefer, *Konnnersreuth*, page 80. (Brömer, Eichstädt, 1928.)



wanting in vanity. She has not changed in any way. In her own eyes she is always the maid-of-all-work she was in 1918.' 'Teresa Neumann has a horror of everything extraordinary. She would prefer to be left alone with God. . . . But obedient to the commands she has received from on high and to the orders of her spiritual director she accepts willingly the fatigues and burden of all these visits.'<sup>1</sup> A wonderful appreciation of her is that given by W. Mut, editor of the *Rosenhain*, who has known her for several years, since the time she fell ill: '*Teresa is the most childlike of souls, the simplest I have ever met in my life. In truth she is humble, absolutely obedient, very kind and willing; in short she is like a child.*'

But without having recourse to all this evidence the opinion of such men as Dr. Kröner and Ima Valesi is worthy of note: 'Hysteria cannot solve the problem, it only shows it in another form.' Or: 'Hysteria is a possible diagnosis, but it has no possibility as an explanation.'

We proceed to the examination for the second symptom of hysteria: the lowering of the moral standard. But the result is still more slender than in the first instance. However is it possible to talk of a want of morality in her life? Dr. Kiefer<sup>2</sup> says: 'It is the same thing from a moral point of view; she is as pure as crystal. The press has already proved this amply. Indeed it would be sufficient to quote her touching prayer: "My God, deliver me from all this; suffer me to become blind once more!" The moral character of our "Spouse of the Passion" is so far above all kind of sin, the blemishes and bitterness of daily life, that none of the horrible injuries heaped upon her by unbelievers touches her inward recollection nor

<sup>1</sup> J. Mayerhofer in the *Allgemeine Rundschau* of July 17, 1926.

<sup>2</sup> *Bayerische Kirchenzeitung*, December 15, 1926.

affects her absolute submission to the will of God. She prays for others always, never for herself.' 'But if thou knowest that by my poor life even a few souls will be led to love thee, let me suffer for all eternity ten times what I suffer now.'<sup>1</sup> Are these the words of one affected by hysteria? Before such an utterance, full of moral heroism, critics are indeed silenced and confounded.

Dr. Kröner finishes his book on the enigma of Konnersreuth :<sup>2</sup> 'The most wonderful of the phenomena, and that alone which we can call a miracle, is precisely that moral manifestation of the character of Teresa.' We can go even farther. In his now famous sermon on the whole question of Konnersreuth, on November 6, 1927, Cardinal Faulhaber, Archbishop of Munich, said : 'There have been theatrical producers who have offered Teresa's parents to transform their tiny dwelling into a theatre. Or they would buy at an incredible price the permission to film Teresa in ecstasy ; her living image could then be shown in all the cinemas of Europe.' What a tempting offer for the poor family of a village tailor ; it meant immediate deliverance from their life of toil and difficulty. In itself the fact of thus making a fortune would have been neither dishonourable nor immoral. But out of respect for the higher ideal which Teresa serves with all her heart, and to guard against its profanation, she and all her family refused, unanimously, this opportunity of material improvement. Before this Max Brod, the publicist, was astounded at their honesty and simplicity. Everything was refused. In our century of quick successes and sensualism all this sounds like a fairy tale. Indeed the heroic virtue of the first Christians has appeared once

<sup>1</sup> P. Völlmecke, Vienna, December 1927.

<sup>2</sup> *Das Rätsel von Konnersreuth*, page 91. (Munich, 1927.)



more in this hidden village of the Bavarian Fichtelgebirge.

*Risum teneatis amici!* It is indeed extraordinary to see all these learned men at their wits' end for arguments, after having befouled the saints and cast aside as useless all religious feeling, and explaining such things by masochism, sadism, unsatisfied sex, imbecility, feebleness of mind and other perversities, obliged to give up before a simple disease, a pathological fact which suddenly brings forth sublime things, is derived from genius, is something prodigious.<sup>1</sup>

Since none of the medical or other witnesses who have seen Teresa in person has dared to speak of fraud (not even Dr. Aigner) there is no need for us to concern ourselves here with this aspect of the subject.

The out-of-date theory of hysteria having proved of no use in Teresa's case, her adversaries quickly turned to more modern ideas to explain what they did not understand. Everyone in fact seemed to have a private opinion, and numerous are the ingenious, fantastic, often impossible, suppositions which have been advanced about this poor country girl. Thus at Berlin a certain Dr. Teilhaber gave a learned lecture in which he sought to prove that Teresa suffered from scurvy, and this on account of her perpetual fast by which she would be deprived of vitamins. So scurvy was the cause of the stigmata! In reading an account of this conference we came to the conclusion that the lecturer had never seen either scurvy or the stigmatist. As chief physician and surgeon at the first military reserve hospital at Chabatz (during the Serbo-Bulgarian war in 1913) we often came in contact with scurvy. In addition to the affections of the gums, there are all over the body, under the skin, little blood

<sup>1</sup> See Schjelderup, *Die Askese*, Berlin, 1928.

spots resembling the bite of a flea. No likeness at all to the stigmata. In the same way the theory that the phenomena are due to methods analogous to those employed by fakirs is entirely out of place. Such manifestations have been seen in India and in Constantinople by the present writer, but as their common characteristic is absolutely wanting in the events of Konnersreuth such an explanation is valueless. For this reason Dr. Kröner's book, which has nevertheless some interesting points, is not convincing. Nor yet can we explain Teresa's stigmata by spiritism, since her ecstasies are in no way like a mediumistic trance, and the other signs, equally, are missing. Metapsychic contingencies, also, are insufficient to elucidate the mystery. The article by Professor Ludwig in the *Zeitschrift für Parapsychologie* is no more successful; it is quoted later on.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Böhm of Nuremberg is also disappointing; in spite of his array of metapsychical science he can find no better explanation than: *Mens agitat molem*, mind governs matter.

Nevertheless there is one modern theory which may be considered; it has at least some scientific and empirical foundation. That is Couéism (or auto-suggestion). This magic healing word has taught astonished medical men to take notice once more of the ancient idea of the soul. The plentiful experiments made in this new branch of medicine were classified and scientifically treated by Professor Baudouin of Geneva, and from them he was able to draw up a whole system of psychology. Since the appearance of his work quite a number of treatises on psychiatry have been published on the same lines, as for example that of Dr. Schwarz: *Über den psychogenen Ursprung der Krankheiten*, or those of Kronfeld, Isserlin, Kohn, etc.

<sup>1</sup> See page 139.



What is auto-suggestion? Really it is a very ordinary process, and one, moreover, employed by everyone times without number every day of their lives. All education is based upon it. It is nothing else than a powerful idea accompanied by strong feeling, one which, introduced into the subconscious mind, is capable of working changes, not only in the functions of the different organs, but in the very organs themselves. It operates in an inverse way to hypochondria, which causes illness, and is a reconstituting force of our lost strength. This theory has been applied with extraordinary results.

The experiments of Dr. Kreibich, professor at the University of Prague, are well known. He dressed with plaster the hand of a person endowed with a strong imagination. Under the plaster he introduced, unknown to his subject, a watch glass, then suggested the idea of a burn at this spot. At the end of about nine minutes a small blister appeared, which showed, under the microscope, all the marks of a burn of the second degree. By inverse suggestion he was able to make the blister disappear. Dr. Brünemann obtained still more remarkable results in the treatment of skin diseases. At will he could make different affections of the skin appear, as, for example, ringworm, ulcers and boils. Not long ago news came from Königsberg of the cure of warts scattered over the whole body by means of this same way of auto-suggestion. The Hungarian, Dr. Scöllesi, was able to obtain even necrosis of the skin to about the size of a crown; it was very painful and did not heal. All this by the force of an idea in a subject endowed with a strong imagination. Dr. Brünemann produced livid spots on the whole forearm, spots underneath the skin of course, for the chief matter which concerns us here is a wound, lasting, and comprising of its very nature a loss of tissue. In our

opinion no one has yet been able to produce this alteration of tissue, which bleeds and does not heal. When we called on the readers of the *Praktickém Lékaři* to produce a case of this nature no answer was forthcoming. Thus there is an immense and impassable gulf between the phenomena produced by auto-suggestion and those of natural stigmatisation. It is impossible to say as yet if ever they will be made to disappear successfully by this method.

The campaign against Konnersreuth became all the more amusing when two rivals to Teresa Neumann appeared, heralded with clamour by the socialist newspapers. One of them—a master wheelwright at Holzhauser—was soon silenced. As a result all the more notice was taken of the other, one Diebel, an ‘honest Silesian miner who by nature can produce all the phenomena of Konnersreuth and more.’ It might be asked why such a man was chosen in this campaign against Teresa. This ‘ juggler ’ was appearing every day at the Tiergarten in Berlin whence his arrival in Prague was announced, and enormous posters claimed that the miracles of Konnersreuth would there be seen and surpassed. The papers were full of the coming event, and some photographs were published. These latter looked indeed suspicious: examined under a reading glass one could see five or six drops of some black liquid coming from the eyelid, very near the lashes. Nothing more. This ‘artist’ sweated blood without being wounded: we pass over a collection of tricks which can only be called those of a pseudo-fakir. Dr. Simsa, a Czech and worthy imitator of Dr. Aigner, was preparing a well-documented lecture which was to prove that the miner, P. Diebel, obtained the same results as Teresa, but by the means of auto-suggestion. For our part we rejoiced in being able



to expose yet another fraud. At the last moment all the arrangements were cancelled by order of the police, even the experiments reserved exclusively to doctors and journalists. Dr. Simsa was indeed fortunate ; his popularity would have most certainly suffered, more especially as Diebel confessed to his fraud three months afterwards.

Someone once went so far as to lecture Teresa, proving to her that she had received the stigmata on account of her continual gazing on the wounds of Jesus. She answered brightly : ' But why is it that those whose only thought is of wickedness and devilry do not receive horns ? ' In conferences on the subject we have often employed the following powerful argument against the opinion that the stigmata are the result of auto-suggestion : thousands of soldiers wanted at all costs to get away from the front during the last war ; one little wound would have been sufficient ! But how many hundreds of gallons of benzine and petrol were there not used to bring on swellings and ulcers, often with serious effects, sometimes causing the loss of a limb, or even life itself ? Would such means have been employed if it had been possible to obtain what was necessary by so simple a method as auto-suggestion ? But not a single case has been recorded. Thus the explanation that Teresa's stigmata are the result of auto-suggestion falls to the ground. It is true that some theologians admit the possibility of stigmatisation in a natural way, in contradistinction to that of grace ; but their thesis lacks arguments to prove it, and these have yet to be found. In conclusion let us quote S. Ignatius Loyola, who gave the following reply to his secretary, Ribadaneira, who had questioned him on the stigmata : ' It is one of the qualities of God to sanctify souls, work in them, and fill them with his gifts. Sometimes he does this in

such a generous way that the fullness of divine grace overflows from the soul even on to the body; then it is that what takes place interiorly pierces through to the exterior. Such cases, however, are extremely rare.'



## CHAPTER X

### THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE STIGMATA

**E**VEN before Paul Diebel, who had certainly the gift of dermographism, was laid aside as useless on account of his confession, it was evident that the origin of Teresa's stigmata could not be explained in a similar way ; all the more was it impossible to conclude that they had been produced by artificial or mechanical means. Some calumniators went so far as to give out that they were caused by animal blood such as is in fact often used by hysterical persons to deceive those about them.

But judging by the fact that Anthony, Bishop of Ratisbon (he died not so long ago) having instituted a special commission to examine the whole case in detail, after receiving its report, had not forbidden visits to the stigmatist, we were convinced that no treachery or irregularities had been discovered. Evidently the ecclesiastical authorities would certainly do all in their power to suppress any fraud of this nature, lest the faithful should be led astray ; and the Church, on the evidence of even her adversaries, certainly does act in all these cases with extraordinary vigilance and care. As nothing was said by the ecclesiastical authorities it was evident that there was no reason to forbid the visits. From a negative we induced a positive.

No official proof of this was forthcoming, however, until November, when the newspapers spoke of the commission's report. Immediately afterwards there

appeared in the *München Medizinische Wochenschrift* (November 18, 1927, Number 46) an article by Dr. Ewald, Extraordinary Professor of Psychiatry in the University of Erlangen. The same article was published in pamphlet form under the title *Die Stigmatisierte von Konnersreuth*.

Both were much talked of. The professor's thesis was refuted by the rector of the Cathedral at Bamberg, Th. Geiger; in a pamphlet at once clear and direct he pointed out the difference between the professor's own personal opinion and the result of the investigation.

Although we are in entire disagreement with Dr. Ewald's conclusions we must at the same time acknowledge his merit in having recognized that the stigmata are not produced in an artificial way. He explains them as caused by a psychic sensation. On the invitation of Dr. Seidl he was present at the deliberations of the commission as an invigilator, and was able personally to examine Teresa's psychic state. He found no nerve trouble. He praises the conscientious work of the four Franciscan sisters, qualified nurses, who had been charged to watch over Teresa night and day, and his reasons for believing the authenticity of the stigmata he summarize as follows :

1. In the first place it is human blood, namely, Teresa's. The blood flowing from the wounds was examined under a microscope and found to be human. For the sake of comparison blood was taken from the lobe of her ear and its identity with the other was established. On my first visit, July 22, Professor Pabstmann told me that already that morning the blood had been examined under a microscope.

2. The spontaneity of the bleeding was verified from the beginning by doctors as well as by others present on that occasion. I repeat here the evidence given by



Professor Pabstmann who was able to observe continuously the bleeding from the eyes.

3. The quantity of blood which is lost during the Friday ecstasies is far greater than that which could be obtained by artificial means. There is no trace of a scar, wound or other affection during or after the bleeding. As is known the 'honest Silesian miner' obtained his pseudo-stigmata by pressing on himself an object in the form of a cube with a keen edge for two hours before his performance. In this way he was able to excite the capillary vessels without damaging the skin. He then pricked himself with a pin near the eyelashes and by holding his breath for a certain period was able during the performance by the pressure thus obtained upon the veins in this region of the body to produce five or six drops of what was believed to be blood. (See the medical report of the case published at Vienna.) Here on the contrary the stigmatist bleeds for about eight hours. Her tear glands must undoubtedly discharge blood instead of tears.

4. On the other wounds blood mixed with a high proportion of serum is found ; it is quite impossible to obtain this artificially. Finally the wound in the side oozes blood and soaks through twenty turns of a gauze bandage.

5. There is no suppuration nor is there any tendency to heal in these wounds ; this point, already mentioned, is incompatible with the nature of an ordinary wound.

6. The wounds appear and bleed during the ecstasies, and except on Fridays they do not bleed. (We have already insisted on this point. It is only during the visions, when it is their turn in the drama of Golgotha, that blood issues from them. At other times they are dry.)

7. For fifteen days and nights Teresa was watched

with such severity that even for a second she was not left alone. (The professor compares it to the discipline of a prison.) Now, during this time, she had no opportunity to do herself an injury nor to provoke the bleeding of the stigmata by rubbing nor any other fraudulent means. The wounds neither disappeared nor changed ; they bled just the same at their ordinary intervals.

8. In conclusion, the professor supposes that 'Teresa's body, so long deprived of food, is in need of vitamines and this renders her subject to hemorrhages. Indeed she sometimes vomits blood from the stomach.'

This evidence effectively disposes of any idea of fraud, of any supposition that it is animal blood used in artificial wounds. Such hypotheses have, unfortunately, deceived many so-called intelligent men, even at the universities, and they have been constrained to attack the poor stigmatist. A greater indignity than to accuse her of such swindling can hardly be imagined.

So the stigmata are real even if they do furnish 'an example of a very rare disease.' (*Ein sehr seltenes Krankheitsbild.*)

In this connection it is by no means uninteresting to read the record kept by Dr. Wessener who was for eleven years in charge of another stigmatist, Anne-Catherine Emmerich, the Augustinian nun who was almost always ailing. In spite of his patient's poverty he was devoted to her, as he owed to her his return to Christianity and the recovery of his health. For six years he recorded each separate bleeding of the stigmata ; they disappeared before 1820. He relates that in 1813 she lived by the Holy Communion alone, taking in addition only a little water or fruit juice. For four years (1813-1817) she had no evacuation of the bowels. But still more striking are the notes he took of the



proceedings of a special governmental commission (Prussian) which examined her in a way that can only be called brutal. It was frankly hostile, and did all in its power to discover any fraud. This was from August 7 to August 29, 1819. It is quite natural that Catherine's rather sensitive, perhaps psychic temperament reacted to this influence ; and that the presence of the commission sufficed to prevent those very phenomena it was sent to investigate ; all the more as the stigmata were on the point of disappearing of their own accord. We can indeed affirm that during these last hundred years the representatives of science have forgotten nothing—nor yet do they seem to have learnt much.

Another interesting case is that of Maria Domenica Lazzari of Trent. Jacobi tells us that she went without eating from 1834 until 1850, the year of her death. The remarkable fact in all these cases is that we encounter in each the communion of the Body of Our Lord in the most Holy Sacrament of the altar. Has the supernatural life which springs from this commemoration of the Passion force and strength in proportion to the potency of its origin ? Some years ago the present writer's favourite author, Görres, writing under the shadow of Strasburg Cathedral, said :

‘ Thus harmony is established between life, made powerful in God, and the food that makes man live. The Eucharist, being the body of our Saviour, receives everyone who will let himself be taken and held in the communion of this body ; and it maintains him in its depths. A mystic, in so far as he is a man of this earth, lives on this earthly food. But since he is plunged, as it were, in God, he lives on this higher food. His life is completed by the divine life of the Word who is given for his food.’

This is the foundation of all mysticism ; the living, namely, of a higher or supernatural life.

In arranging the various documents and in our researches we have been unable to find the least trace of trickery, conscious or unconscious ; we should be the first to expose it had we done so. But what has led us to defend Konnersreuth against all comers was the sight of its adversaries making mockery of what is most holy in a human creature : its religious feelings. Alone the conviction that Teresa Neumann led a life entirely wrapped in God gave us the courage to undertake this struggle against her calumniators who pretend to speak in the name of science and progress.

The Church conscious of her responsibility could not consider for a moment the possibility of leaving the question unexamined ; she was bound to test it to see if it came from God, or if, on the other hand, it were merely of human origin. It is evident that whatever passes within her pale concerns her specially and that she has a special obligation to see that the truth be found. The severity of the Church in these cases is proverbial, and this is well exemplified in the processes for canonization.

In spite of all we have said here and of what the ecclesiastical authorities themselves have observed the case is not yet closed ; as long as Teresa is living it will remain undecided. It is only afterwards that a definite and exact judgement can be formed, and to this judgement the author of these lines will submit unreservedly.

For this reason we give here in our book (which is entirely documentary in character) some indications of the position taken up by the Church in these cases, and of her attitude to the phenomena concerning Teresa Neumann. The ecclesiastical authorities were by no means in favour of what was taking place at Konners-



reuth. Anthony, the Bishop of Ratisbon, showed very little interest in the stigmatist, yet it was he who set on foot the inquiry when it was seen that the events continued with a like intensity. The result was published in the official circular of the diocese of Ratisbon, dated October 4, 1927. There it stated expressly that 'Teresa Neumann takes no nourishment at all.' The whole report is published in von Lama's book with the signature of Dr. Scheglmann, the Vicar-General, and of M. Wührl, the bishop's secretary.

Nevertheless the assembly of Bavarian bishops recommended an attitude of caution and decided that the great numbers of visitors should be limited; on many Fridays they had attained the respectable figure of several thousands. Before reaching a decision they wished to know the opinion of the local authorities: the Bishop of Ratisbon had lately died. Thus, too, the Archbishop of Munich, Cardinal Faulhaber, in his sermon on the matter which was preached in November, notwithstanding a very marked sympathy, advised strongly against any hasty opinion. So the crowds of curious people who had easy access to Teresa were to be stopped and visits had to be limited to the very minimum. On the other hand, precautions were to be taken against the possible indiscretions of worldly people, especially of those who were staying at the nearby spas. Then, too, all danger of commercial exploitation of these phenomena had to be avoided; there were many who would have taken advantage of Konnersreuth for the sake of gain. But perhaps the principal reason for these restrictions was to give a little rest to the poor parish priest, who was on the verge of a breakdown, as well as to the Neumann family whose life was absolutely disorganized by these manifestations. Visitors to the stigmatist henceforward needed episcopal permission, but that did not

mean that all those of the other way of thinking were excluded.

During all this time the case was examined according to the principles laid down by Cardinal Faulhaber : Christ performed miracles and promised his Church that he would perform others through her. But such miracles must be put to the proof to see if their ends and signification are good ; to discover if the person performing them is really submitted to the will of God, for obedience is worth all stigmata, however miraculous. The miracles of old are sufficient for our faith. The Church is not founded on the events of Konnersreuth, and will not fall without them. Nor has she made of them an article of belief. She pronounces on such matters in no haste, and hence it is not for us to anticipate her decision.

Therefore according to the judgement of the ecclesiastical authorities only Teresa's virtues can help to solve the problem. Thus she is watched with doubled attention.

Mgr. Michael Buchberger, the new Bishop of Ratisbon, went in person to Konnersreuth. In the actual state of the case trickery and all manner of doubt can be discounted with almost absolute certainty, and we are strengthened in this conviction by the numerous visits of prelates from all over the world : from places so far apart as South and North America, and Mesopotamia. Cardinal Piffl, Archbishop of Vienna, was there not so long ago, and still more lately the Archbishop of Munich. But even before this, Pius XI, in consequence of what had been reported to him, was pleased to grant to Father Naber and to the stigmatist his apostolic blessing.

We cannot conclude this chapter better than by quoting the beautiful words of Cardinal Faulhaber :

' Even before a definite judgement is pronounced Konnersreuth can be for us a message of grace :



men of modern times stricken with modern sorrows return to the pious veneration of the Passion of Christ and take refuge in his wounds. A child of the Fichtelgebirge, with complete resignation, becomes lost in the contemplation of the sorrows of Jesus, especially on Fridays. In compassion she sheds tears of blood and has become a living image of the Crucified . . . and this poor child having no other instruction than what she was given in the elementary school has nevertheless learnt to draw all her knowledge from the book of the cross. Preaching without words, but by the force of example, she has led the humanity of Europe to the foot of the cross of Christ and buried it in his wounds : thus rings out from to-day the message of Konnersreuth.'

We repeat : *Roma non est locuta, causa non est finita*. There is no official declaration from Rome on the subject of Konnersreuth, and for this reason everyone is at liberty to judge as they think best, but within the limits of logic and general experience. The question will remain open, but that does not prevent us from applying to it the maxim of S. Augustine : '*In necessariis unitas, in dubiis libertas, in omnibus caritas*,' or in other words let the discussion be conducted in a spirit of charity, with love for him who is thus represented for us anew, and for her who is his instrument and suffers such torments in soul and body.

## CHAPTER XI

### CONCLUSION

**D**IRECTLY after our first visit to Konnersreuth we set ourselves to discover the reason for the intervention of S. Teresa of the Child Jesus. She could hardly be Teresa Neumann's patron because she was only canonized in 1925. In search of a solution we called on an intimate friend of the stigmatist, Miss L. Z. of Franzensbad, who gave us the following details :

' When the world-war broke out Teresa Neumann was sixteen. She was getting ready for her entry into a missionary order. Her father, although he had ten children, was obliged to leave for the front. Before his departure he bought in Waldsassen a holy picture for each one of his children. Among these pictures was one of the Carmelite sister of Lisieux, with a prayer on the back for her canonization. Hardly knowing why, Teresa took this picture in her hands saying, " You aren't my patron, but you are so pleasing to me, as if you were going to help me a great deal one day." She kept the picture as a souvenir of her father at the front and said the prayer on the back so frequently that at last she knew it by heart. More especially during the time of her illness and her blindness it was her favourite devotion after the veneration of the Blessed Trinity.'



Thus did she enter into relationship with that immense store of spiritual power and energy whose existence the Church teaches in her doctrine of the communion of saints. What is happening with Teresa Neumann is but palpable proof of this article of faith.

The repeated appearances of the saint of Lisieux to Teresa are facts which speak for themselves and which cannot be relegated to the domain of imagination. Her radiant example played an important part in the spiritual development of the stigmatist of Konnersreuth, who was introduced by her to the way of simplicity and spiritual childhood which leads directly to God, and which in this case brought forth the wonderful fruit of the stigmata. To our many and repeated questions in our search for the key to the mystery Miss L. Z. exclaimed: 'Doctor, could you but see her pray! Ah! how she prays! Her face becomes lighted up; she is no longer recognizable. It is impossible for her to pray in the nave of the church now; it disturbs the services, because everybody looks at her. That is why she always goes behind the altar.'

Although Professor Wutz, bound by professional secrecy, could tell us nothing of the Aramaic Teresa hears during her ecstasies, yet the allusion he made to her interior life confirmed our impression that it is a question of a purely mystical phenomenon. There is yet another circumstance which is even more convincing. Dr. Weissl in his report of 1927 quotes the last words the parish priest, Father Naber, said to him on his departure: 'Of course you should know that all that is nothing extraordinary. What is most important is Teresa's prayer. . . . With what simplicity and fervour does she pray; like a child speaking to its father. The Lord's Prayer is her favourite, but her whole manner of prayer is extraordinarily affecting. . . . In her prayer there is more, much more than we

can say at the present time. On this point something is preparing without our knowing in what direction the development will take place.'

By the help of these few indications we were able to construct our thesis for the first edition of this book in 1927, in spite of the fact that nothing was officially communicated about Teresa's fast and other important matters. With each new book we read about Konnersreuth the more we become convinced that our opinion of these phenomena is the right one. It has, moreover, been adopted by the ecclesiastical authorities. The present writer has derived great benefit from the events of Konnersreuth: they led him towards the study of the literature of mysticism. Naturally he had already a certain knowledge of it but these phenomena surpassed all that had been learnt beforehand. They bore out the truth of Harnack's dictum: 'A mystic who does not become a Catholic is but an amateur.' What richness is there in Catholic mysticism. Surely it is but enough to make the comparison between a Teresa of Jesus or a John of the Cross and the representatives of the Indian mystics, the followers of occultism, to prefer the spring of living water to such illusory spectres and doubtful visions.

In the summer of 1927 ours was the only book on the subject which supposed the events taking place at Konnersreuth were the result of mysticism; the others were completely taken up with the exterior side of the question. Professor Ludwig<sup>1</sup> was the first to support our hypothesis. He writes in his articles entitled, 'The enigma of Konnersreuth unsolved without Christian Mysticism':

'It is indeed astonishing that all the German writers speaking of Konnersreuth only look on it

<sup>1</sup> In the *Zeitschrift für Parapsychologie*, December 1927 and following numbers.



from the outside and do not see the very centre of it all whence emanates the mystical life of Teresa Neumann. They ignore altogether Christian mysticism, which is none the less a theological science based on the experience of several centuries. Mysticism in the sense understood by the Church is the union of the soul with God. By the purgative, illuminative and unitive ways the soul is led to its supreme end.

‘Numbers of Catholic mystics have lived this life of union with God in a very real way. Several have tried to communicate these sensations to others by describing them methodically.

‘In studying the life of our stigmatist with attention we observe that she too belongs to this group of Christian mystics. The facts given by Father Witt in his book<sup>1</sup> on the subject prove this. How touching an incident is that when Teresa answers the voice coming from the burning light. “I accept all, to live or to die, to be well or to be ill.” To the following question: “Are you happy in being able to suffer?” she answered: “I rejoice in all that comes from the good God. I rejoice to see the flowers, the birds, or at the advent of new sufferings. My greatest joy is my Saviour.” It is no mere victim of hysteria speaking here, but a heart devoted to God and loving him, the heart of a pure and joyful child.’

Later we found much help in von Lama’s book; he was the first to give proofs of an intense and regularly developed interior life in Teresa Neumann. He relates how after being given the little pictures of S. Teresa of the Child Jesus she conceived the desire to live the interior life with a like abandon, a like childlike simplicity as the Discalced Carmelite of Lisieux. She

<sup>1</sup> L. Witt, *Konnnersreuth*. (Waldsassen, 1927.)

was greatly encouraged in her project by the Salesian review *Rosenhain*, edited at Munich. Von Lama quotes the editor, Dr. Wutz: 'For ten years I have been labouring, through the magazine *Rosenhain*, to spread the spirit of childlikeness. The insight into this simple soul which it was given me to acquire has been a generous recompense for my labours, the more so because she grew up and became mature as a reader of *Rosenhain*.'<sup>1</sup>

In an equal degree must be acknowledged the merit of her confessor and parish priest, Father Naber; he soon recognized in her the desire for perfection and gave her excellent spiritual direction. This man's high moral character constitutes the best guarantee for the phenomena which have been produced in his spiritual child. 'He taught her to live always in the presence of God and recommended to her the frequent use of ejaculatory prayers. Her suffering prevented her from reciting longer prayers. Her favourite prayer, which she said with complete simplicity and interior fervour, was this: "My God and my All, what have I in Heaven, what do I love on earth excepting thee, thou God of my Heart, and my portion in Eternity!" . . . At a parish mission in 1921, the missionary taught her this ejaculation: "Take me from myself and give me to thyself!" These words taught her much, in particular that complete abandonment to the will of God which Thérèse of the Infant Jesus recommends and the conquest of self.'<sup>2</sup>

Although we have now some idea of the origin and reason for these mystic phenomena we are not able to judge them always from this point of view. Our Saviour said: 'By their fruits ye shall know them,' and established thus a safe and certain principle for the

<sup>1</sup> Friedrich Ritter von Lama, *Therese Neumann: A Stigmatist of our day*, page 149. (New York, 1929.)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*



judgement of human acts. Eighteen hundred years afterwards the American philosopher, William James, built up his system of pragmatism on this same principle.

Hence it is that the fruits, the deeds of the stigmatist, the spiritual action of Konnersreuth on the surrounding nations can serve as criteria in our judgement of it. If the fruits be good, that very fact will be for us a certain guarantee, will help us in our judgement and aid us to come to a definite conclusion. Then, too, the Church has already a tremendous experience in these affairs, so much so that a tradition has been formed in the course of the ages ; especially is this true since the time of Benedict XIV who codified the different rules governing these matters. In addition all the evidence is available to the ecclesiastical authorities so that the smallest detail may be examined ; they have, too, the collaboration of the ordinary commissions.

Father Pfülf, S.J., tells us what are the conditions : ' The soul of a mystic should bear the mark of a very special character and greatness as a proof that the Spirit of God is with it.' Farther on he says : ' Ecstasies, visions, stigmata and other like phenomena, being but secondary marks of the true mystical soul, suffice to certify the presence of supernatural intervention only in the case where they are indissolubly bound up with spiritual, religious and moral superiority. In short the Church demands heroic virtue first and foremost, that is, virtue which is really superhuman.' The same ideas may be found in Professor Zahn's *Einführung in d. Christliche Mystik*.<sup>1</sup> There he says : ' Everyone of the faithful as well as the ecclesiastical authorities have at hand the signs which differentiate the natural from the supernatural, what is pathological from what is due to the *charisma*. In the

<sup>1</sup> Page 448. (Schöningen, Paderborn, 1922.)

case in which the subject who has the stigmata does not show a life which is absolutely blameless it is useless to waste one's time in examining the phenomena. *Vice versa* : purity of life, a high religious standard, progress in the spiritual life allow us all the more easily to conclude that the visions and the stigmata are supernatural in character and veritable gifts of divine grace.'

Teresa Neumann's family has always enjoyed an unblemished reputation in the neighbourhood. As is the rule in small places life would have been impossible for it if but a single dishonest act could be imputed to one of its members, especially to one so universally known as Teresa. Her integrity of character is proved not only by her disinterestedness, which could go so far as to refuse the immense sum offered by the film company, but it appears also in the simplicity, the kind-heartedness, the modesty, with which she receives visitors. Max Brod, the publicist, declares that he cannot understand why she has not grown proud after such extraordinary events, events which would easily turn the head of the most virtuous. The Neumann family remains none the less the simple family of a country tailor, and accepts the annoyances caused by such crowds of visitors as a natural sacrifice for the sake of religion.

Another guarantee, quasi-official in nature, is given us by ecclesiastical authority in the person of Teresa's confessor and spiritual director. This priest, remarkable for his spirituality and affability, is of such integrity of character that no one has been able to reproach his conduct in any way.

Anyone who has visited Konnersreuth cannot help admiring and esteeming him. All the reports written about the stigmatist bear witness to this ; so much so that there is no need for us to labour the point here.



This worthy man has known Teresa for eighteen years, that is since she was twelve. He visited her during the whole time of her illness, and still now sees her freely and without hindrance. His spiritual child certainly owes much to him in the development of her interior life. Has he not been with her through all these events? Has he not observed in the course of long years her humility, patience, her love for her parents, brothers and sisters, her neighbours, and above all for God? Did he not try her faith? Does he not know all the facets of her soul? He is, obviously, the most competent of witnesses.

There are three principal traits to which her confessor, and those who know Teresa well, attach special importance. Firstly, there is her profound and sincere humility—a cardinal virtue of the spiritual life. Indeed humility is the virtue which can be most remarked in the great disciples of him who said: ‘Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart.’ Our stigmatist has not been made proud by the phenomena that the whole world admires in her. On the contrary, as may be witnessed by all who go to Konnersreuth, she has remained as she was during the war, a simple country servant.

Obedience is the very keystone of humility. Teresa has reached such a degree in this virtue that her parents cannot recall an act of disobedience on her part. What a prodigy in our emancipated and independent age! She received the order forbidding her to receive visitors without a word, and submitted at once. How indeed can one speak of vanity or egoism? Dr. Gerlich writes on this point: ‘In her ideas obedience plays an important role, and thus she has always insisted on absolute submission to the ecclesiastical authorities.’

This devotion to Christ’s visible representatives on

earth is derived solely from her devotion to and love of God. Is not this quality the condition and indeed the consequence of the mystic way chosen by Teresa? Dr. Niesser reports the following characteristic utterance of the parish priest, Father Naber: 'This young girl has let Our Lord direct her at his ease. She will undertake nothing of herself, nor will she deny him anything. We wish to be but the simple instruments of God if he wills to use us as such.'

The source and the principal guarantee of these virtues is to be found in *The Little Way* of S. Teresa of the Child Jesus, the way of spiritual childhood of which Benedict XV said in 1921: 'Her little way of spiritual childhood is the very secret of holiness.' This is a case in which one can apply without reserve the words of our Saviour: 'Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the kingdom of heaven.'

The meaning of the stigmata, the outward signs of this intense mystical life lived by Teresa Neumann, cannot be better expressed than by the words used by the Church in her Liturgy:

O Lord Jesus Christ, who, when the world was growing cold, didst renew the sacred marks of the passion on the body of blessed Francis, so as to kindle in our hearts the fire of thy love; grant, in thy mercy, that with the help of his merits and prayers we may ever carry our cross and bring forth worthy fruits of penance.

(*Collect in the Roman Missal for the feast of the Stigmata of S. Francis of Assisi. September 17.*)

Something unheard of has come to pass in our time: that living faith which according to so many different opinions should have disappeared long ago and is but the inheritance of the past has burst anew on our



century, and celebrates its glorious resurrection. Like the phoenix it rises again from its ashes : new, living, more powerful, more beautiful and more magnificent than ever it soars again in the heavens, the fires of the injuries heaped upon it have had but the effect of purifying it and making it more robust.

At a time when nearly all the systems of philosophy are failing and the dreams of sociologists vanish, insufficient as they are to order human life and give that peace and happiness of heart so longed for by all, a soul filled with living faith appears like a meteor in the night of despair : Teresa Neumann, a being consumed by the love of Christ, our ideal restored.

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